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HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF THE

REIGN OF GEORGE SECOND

By MRS OLIPHANT

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

35445

"THE WEB OF OUR LIFE IS OF A MINGLED YARN, GOOD AND ILL TOGETHER; OUR VIRTUES WOULD BE PROUD IF OUR FAULTS WHIPPED THEM NOT; AND OUR CRIMES WOULD DESPAIR IF THEY WERE NOT NOURISHED BY OUR VIRTUES."

—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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VII

THE REFORMER

THE REFORMER.

IT is difficult, either from the bare facts of history or from disjointed scenes in it, to arrive at any clear idea of the general state of feeling and thought at any special period. It is only, indeed, within recent days, that modern history has troubled itself with any endeavour to realise the spiritual fashion and wont of the age it painted. So many things happened—so many battles were fought—so many kings reigned,—its audience asked no more. The reigns of the first Georges were occupied with a struggle to establish their dynasty; to set the constitutional government of the country on sure foundations; to settle a great many questions on the Continent, with which England had not very much to do. Such is the record; and a very bare record it is, notwithstanding the depths of individual interest that are contained underneath. But, fortunately, the public mind has nowadays taken to a certain curiosity about how things came about; and there are few subjects which could more call for

such a preliminary inquiry than the one on which we are about to enter. Such a figure as John Wesley does not arise in a country without urgent need, or without circumstances that account for most of the angles in it. To consider the apparition by itself, without considering these, is to lose half its significance, as well as to judge unjustly, in all probability, of the chief personage of the narrative—a man not rising vaguely out of society, without any call or necessity, but tragically demanded by a world ready to perish, and born out of the very hopelessness of its need.

The sketches which have preceded this, though attempting no analysis or even description of the period, must have failed altogether of their end if they have not indicated an age singularly devoid not only of religion, but of all spirituality of mind, or reference to things unseen. The noble natural qualities of Queen Caroline, and her high devotion to the view of duty, of which her mind was most capable—the patriotism (such as it was) of Walpole—the amazing paternal love of Chesterfield—are all as independent of any religious motive or meaning as if those princely personages had been as heathen in name as they were in reality. The wonderful wifely support and countenance which Caroline steadfastly gave, in spite of all the repugnance of nature, to her faithless and often contemptible husband, gave at the same time an unseemly countenance to vice. Walpole served his country and the devil together, and

laughed at the very idea of goodness. Chesterfield, in devotion to one of the most blessed of natural pieties, did not blush to encourage his young son in shameless wickedness. Pope babbled loudly of the vice for which his weak frame incapacitated him, and held his hereditary faith for honour's sake, without the slightest appearance or pretence of any spiritual attachment to it. They had some pagan virtues amid their perpetual flutter of talk and dissipation: one was a good son, another a good father, a third a most loyal and tender wife; and yet, take them either together or apart, it is clear as daylight that thought of God, or care for religion, was not in them. They were not impious except by moments; but they were godless, earthly, worldly, without consciousness of anything more in heaven or earth than was dreamed of in the most limited philosophy.

It was one of the moments in which the world had fallen out of thought of God. Other ages may have been as wicked, but we doubt whether any age had learned so entirely to forget its connection with higher things, or the fact that a soul which did not die—an immortal being akin to other spheres—was within its clay. The good men were inoperative, the bad men were dauntless; the vast crowd between the two, which forms the bulk of humanity, felt no stimulus towards religion, and drowsed in comfortable content. It was the age when the chaplain married my lady's maid, and ate at the second table, and would even lend a hand to carry my lord to bed at night, after

he had dropped under the table, and turn a deaf ear to the blasphemy with which his speech was adorned. It was the age when delicate young women, of the best blood and best manners in the land, talked with a coarseness which editors of the nineteenth century can represent only by asterisks; and in which the most polished and dainty verse, Pope's most melodious, correctest couplets, were interspersed with lines which would damn for ever and ever any modern poetaster. Personal satire, poor instrument of vengeance which stings and wounds without any power of amending, had such sway as it has never had before in England; but that sense of public honour which prevents open outrage upon decency was not in existence. The public liked the wicked story, and liked the scourge that came after; and laughed, not in its sleeve, but loudly, at blasphemy and indecency and profanity. Even the sentiment of cleanness, purity, and honour, was lost to the generation. Its soul was good for nothing but to point an oath. The name of God was still used in public documents as giving victories and confounding enemies, and such-like; and in private very freely, as the most round syllable to clench the perpetual curse; but was of no more spiritual significance than the name of George or James, and not half so much external weight. Such was the age: a period of confused fighting, here for Maria Theresa, there for Charles XII., again for the fallen, ever-falling Stuarts; with no principle in the strife, and little good coming out

of it to any man or kingdom, except perhaps in the end, the Prussian; and, so far as England was concerned, a gradual weaning of the popular mind from any belief or hope in excellence, or power of contrasting the good with the evil. So long as Excise-bills were held aloof, and tranquillity preserved, what did it matter whether light or darkness was uppermost? or, indeed, was not darkness the rule, and light, if not painful, at least indifferent, to the eye, —not a matter to make any fuss about? One of the most hopeless unexalted ages that ever benumbed the faculties of man.

"I have observed the clergy in all the places through which I have travelled," says Bishop Burnet in 1713, not a hard or difficult judge,—"Papists, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Dissenters; but of them all, our clergy is much the most remiss in their labours in private, and the least severe in their lives." "A due regard to religious persons, places, and things has scarce in any age been more wanting," says Atterbury in 1711. Twenty years later, the famous Nonconformist Calamy laments the "real decay of serious religion both in the Church and out of it." To this country and age, lying in ignorance, in that sneering and insolent profanity which is, of all others, the most hateful condition into which humanity can fall, John Wesley was born—and not a day too soon.

The Reformer, whose influence upon his generation was so extraordinary, is not one of those who

concentrate the spectator's attention upon themselves, or move him to passionate sympathy, admiration, and love, blotting out, to some extent, the meaner earth. His progress through life is rather that of a moving light which throws gleams upon the darkling mass around it. His very cradle illuminates a quaint family picture, opening up to us one of the still pious households which broke with their quaint religiousness and formal order the level of reckless living. His father was vicar of Epworth in Lincolnshire, a good man, of Nonconformist lineage, but a zealous Churchman; his mother, the daughter of one of the ejected ministers. Mr Samuel Wesley had been driven out of the Dissenting body by the fierce sectarianism of the community; his wife, with more remarkable individuality, "had examined the controversy between the Dissenters and the Church of England with conscientious diligence, and satisfied herself that the schismatics were in the wrong." Such a pair at the head of a large family in the little parsonage among the fens developed various quaint features of religious opinionativeness which have worn out of fashion in our day. The husband had gained his benefice by a little book about the Revolution, which he dedicated to Queen Mary. Years after, it struck the good man that at prayers his wife did not say amen to his petition for Dutch William; and he found, on inquiry, that to her the King of the Revolution was still Prince of Orange, an unnatural usurper. She had said nothing about her dissent

from his opinions on this subject, being impressed, as Southey says, by a deep sense of "the duty and wisdom of obedience." But in this case, as in most others, it is evident that the husband did not see the beauty of that much commended but highly unpleasant duty. He went off in a pet, as husbands when "obeyed" are too apt to do, and vowed never to see or communicate with the schismatic again till she had changed her mind. This humorous incident is not, however, turned into a moral lesson by any change of mind on the part of Mrs Susannah. The king died, which answered the purpose just as well, and the husband came back, somewhat sheepishly one cannot but think, leaving the victory in her hands.

Another controversy of a less amusing character which arose between them shows that the duty of obedience, after all, was not the first in Mrs Wesley's mind. Her husband, evidently a self-willed and hot-headed man, though a good and true one, was in the habit of attending the sittings of Convocation, "at an expense of money which he could ill spare from the necessities of so large a family, and at a cost of time which was injurious to his parish." There was no afternoon service at the church at Epworth during his absences; and, with a curious foreshadowing of what was to come, the clergyman's wife took in hand a little domestic service on the Sunday evenings, praying and reading with her children and servants as a mother and mistress may. But by degrees a

few neighbours dropped in, and Mrs Wesley did not think it proper "that their presence should interrupt the duty of the hour." The thing grew, so that at length thirty or forty people would be present at the domestic worship. Mr Wesley, busy with his Convocation squabbles, heard and took fright at this unusual proceeding. It does not seem to have moved him to the length of coming back and looking after his own business; but he made haste to write to her that her conduct "looked particular"—that, as the wife of a public person, it behoved her to exercise discretion—and that she ought to employ some one else to read for her. To this she answered at length, in a letter which most singularly anticipates many of the views afterwards proclaimed by her son:—

"As I am a woman," writes Mrs Wesley, "so I am also mistress of a large family; and though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care as a talent committed to me under a trust by the great Lord of all the families both of heaven and earth. . . . As these and other suchlike thoughts made me at first take a more than ordinary care of the souls of my children and servants, so, knowing our religion required a strict observation of the Lord's day, and not thinking that we fully answered the end of the institution by going to church unless we filled up the intermediate spaces of time by other acts of piety and devotion, I thought it my duty to spend some part of the day in reading to and instructing my family. And such time I esteemed spent in a way more acceptable to God than if I had retired to my own private devotions. This was the beginning of my present practice: other people's coming in and joining with us was merely accidental. Our lad told his parents: they first desired to be admitted;—

then others that heard of it begged leave also. So our company increased to about thirty; and it seldom exceeded forty last winter.

"But soon after you went to London last, I light on the account of the Danish missionaries. I was, I think, never more affected with anything. I could not forbear spending good part of that evening in praising and adoring the divine goodness for inspiring them with such ardent zeal for His glory. At last it came into my mind, though I am not a man nor a minister, yet I might do something more than I do. I thought I might pray more for them, and might speak to those with whom I converse with more warmth of affection. I resolved to begin with my own children, in which I observe the following method: I take such a proportion of time as I can spare each night to discourse with each child apart. On Monday I talk with Molly, on Tuesday with Hetty, Wednesday with Henry, Thursday with Jacky, Friday with Patty, Saturday with Charles, and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday.

"With those few neighbours that then came to me, I discoursed more freely and affectionately. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we have. And I spent somewhat more time with them in such exercises without being careful about the success of my undertaking. Since this our company increased every night; for I dare deny none that ask admittance. Last Sunday I believe we had above two hundred; and yet many went away for want of room to stand. . . . .

"I cannot conceive why any should reflect on you because your wife endeavours to draw people to church, and to restrain them from profaning the Lord's day by reading to them, and other persuasions. For my part, I value no censure on this account. I have long since shook hands with the world; and I heartily wish I had never given them more occasion to speak against me. As to its looking particular, I grant it does. And so does almost everything that is serious, or that may any way advance the glory of God or the salvation of souls.

"As for your proposal of letting some other person read, alas! you don't consider what a people these are. I don't think one man among them could read a sermon without spelling a good

part of it. Nor has any of our family a voice strong enough to be heard by such a number of people.

"But there is one thing about which I am much dissatisfied —that is, their being present at family prayers. I don't speak of any concern I am under barely because so many are present. For those who have the honour of speaking to the great and holy God need not be ashamed to speak before the whole world; but because of my sex I doubt if it is proper for me to present the prayers of the people to God. Last Sunday I would fain have dismissed them before prayers; but they begged so earnestly to stay I durst not deny them."

This letter throws a strange light upon the rude little village community, in which there was scarcely one who could read without spelling, and on the first throb of spiritual and intellectual life which thrilled, through means of an "awakening" sermon, into the dull and nameless mass. The brave, pious, warm-hearted woman, with her troop of little children about her knees—her husband wandering about, evidently for considerable periods, or such a story would be incomprehensible—her mind strong enough to pass conventional boundaries, but not too strong for religious scruples about her sex—makes a very quaint and at the same time a very attractive picture. Jacky, whom his mother took apart on Thursday, was John Wesley, the prophet of his age; and there is little to wonder at in his future life when we trace it to such a beginning. Mrs Wesley, however, had not come to an end of the matter by this letter. The curate, enraged by such an invasion of his province, wrote complaining that a conventicle was held in the parsonage; and the absent husband replied, again in alarm,

forbidding the meetings. Then Mrs Wesley availed herself of that weapon which law and virtue had put into her hand—she offered to *obey*. "Do not tell me that you *desire* me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience," she says, "but send me your *positive command*." "Wesley made no further objections," says Southey, who does not see any humour in it. He was "perhaps ashamed," the poet thinks. It is curious enough, considering how much we make in theory of the notion of conjugal obedience, that there is no such prompt mode of driving a husband wild as a meek proposal on his wife's part to obey him. When it comes to that fatal point the well-conditioned male creature has nothing left but to give in. So little has the prettiest theory to do with the actual necessities of life.

We are tempted to quote from another letter of this remarkable woman, concerning the mode in which Jacky and the rest were brought up. After the most detailed laws (evidently unalterable as Holy Writ) of their management from the cradle upwards in respect to external habits, she goes on to the discipline of the mind :—

"In order" (says Mrs Wesley) "to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is a work of time, and must, with children, proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once, and the sooner the better. When the will of a child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of its parents, then a great many childish fol-

lies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reproved; but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children without chastisement, more or less, as the nature and circumstance of the offence require. . . . They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted; . . . nor were they ever permitted to *call each other by their proper names without the addition of brother or sister.* None of them were taught to read till five years old except Kezzy, in whose case I was overruled, and she was more years learning than any of the rest had been months. The way of teaching was this. The day before a child began to learn, the house was set in order, every one's work appointed them, and a charge given that none should come into the room from nine to twelve, or from two to five, which you know were our school-hours. One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters, and each of them did in that time learn all its letters, great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly, for which I then thought them very dull; but since I have observed how long many children are learning the hornbook I have changed my opinion. . . . There were several by-laws observed among us. I mention them here, because I think them useful. 1. It had been observed that cowardice and fear of punishment often leads children into lying, till they get a custom of it which they cannot leave. To prevent this, a law was made that whoever was charged with a fault of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it and promise to amend, should not be beaten. This rule prevented a great deal of lying, and would have done more if one in the family would have observed it. But he could not be prevailed upon, and therefore was often imposed on. . . . 3. That no child should ever be chid or beaten twice for the same fault, and that if they amended they should never be upbraided with it afterwards. 4. That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed upon their own inclinations, should be always commended and frequently rewarded according to the merits of the cause. 5. That if ever

any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted. 6. That property be inviolably preserved, and none suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter, though it were but of the value of a farthing or a pin. . . . This rule can never be too much inculcated on the minds of children, and from the want of parents or governesses doing it as they ought proceeds that shameful neglect of justice which we may observe in the world. . . . 8. That no girl be taught to work till she can read very well. . . . This rule also is much to be observed; for the putting children to learn sewing before they can read perfectly is the very reason why so few women can read fit to be heard, and never to be well understood."

The reader will feel that he is gazing into an almost Dutch interior as he reads this code of domestic law. The solemnity of it, the minuteness, the sense of importance as of a great ruler, the softly disapproving regretful memory of Kezzy's mangled education in which the lawgiver was overruled; and of the more momentous regulation which "one of the family" could not be made to observe, strikes with a tender humour into the tale. Clear enough, "he" who "could not be prevailed upon" to carry out this perfect system was something of a thorn in Mrs Wesley's flesh. She had to bear with him by times, as well as to respect and honour him. Strange things, too, happened at Epworth to derange, had that been possible, the minute method of the family. Wicked parishioners whom Mr Wesley admonished of their sins, behaved themselves with a violence characteristic of the age. Twice they tried to set his house on fire, and at last, on a third attempt, did so, burning out

the too zealous parson, and all but sacrificing Jacky, then six years old, in the flames. But these external troubles were not all. Some tricksy spirit got possession of the house, uttering dismal groans, rumbling up and down stairs, sometimes with the step of a man, sometimes with heavier inarticulate sounds. Knocks were heard about the beds, and in various parts of the house, which nobody, alas! was then skilled to interpret. There were sounds of dancing in empty rooms, of bottles breaking, and a hundred other diabolical-ridiculous noises. The family at first were full of alarm, thinking the sounds were warnings of some approaching calamity, the parents characteristically apprehending danger to their eldest son. "If thou art the spirit of my son Sammy," said the perturbed father, "I pray, knock three knocks and no more;" but to the great relief of the household no answer was made to this appeal. In time, however, the devil ceased to alarm the cheerful house. The young people became used to him, and adventured little jokes on his character and propensities. The sisters gave each a different account to the absent Sammy as soon as he was ascertained to be safe and sound. Emily is indignant that her father should have imagined it "to be some of us young women that sat up late and made a noise. His incredulity, and especially his imputing it to us, or our lovers, made me, I own, desirous of its continuance till he was convinced," adds the candid girl. "I believe it to be witchcraft," she says, a little after. "About a

year since there was a disturbance at a town near us, that was undoubtedly witches; and if so near, why may they not reach us? . . . I do so really believe it to be one (*i.e.*, a witch), that I would venture to fire a pistol at it." Sister Sukey, for her part, gets tired of the noisy visitor, whom the girls had nicknamed Jeffrey, their very fright evidently being unable to conquer fun. "Send me some news, for we are secluded from the sight or hearing of any versal thing, except Jeffrey," writes Susannah, although she has just described a new incident, how, "to my father's no small amazement, his trencher danced on the table a pretty while without anybody stirring the table, when lo! an adventurous wretch took it up and spoiled the sport, for it remained still ever after." The whole story is recorded with a mingled seriousness and humour and perfect belief, which is very quaint and amusing. Mr Wesley loses his temper and calls the devil names, threatening it with a pistol on one occasion. Samuel at a distance gravely writes to ask, "Have you dug in the place where the money seemed poured at your feet?" although even he yields to a sense of humour when he is told that the fiend objects to the prayers for the King. "Were I the King myself, I should rather Old Nick was my enemy than my friend," he says. Southey, who gives full details of these marvellous occurrences without the least attempt (which indeed would have been folly) to assail the veracity of the united family, has no words strong enough at an after period to condemn

Wesley's belief in the extraordinary effects which were produced by his preaching—the bodily agonies, cries, and convulsions, which, however little we may understand them, are phenomena too well established to be set aside as mere delusion. It does not seem to occur to him that the boy who had been familiar with "Jeffrey," and whose relations, all in full possession of a degree of intelligence and cultivation remarkable in their sphere, fully believed these pranks to be played by witches or spirits, was of all others least likely to forestall his age, and reject the idea of supernatural interference in the most important affairs of men.

It was from this kindly, cheerful, methodical, pious house, full of quaint formality and fixed rule, but yet not without the pleasant freedom of a large family, that the Reformer came. His life, as has been mentioned, was saved almost miraculously when the house was burned. He was educated at Charter-House under the distant inspection, it would appear, of his brother Samuel, then usher at Westminster, with whom was Charles, the youngest son of the house. "Jack is with me, and a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can," says the elder brother at some moment of holiday. The big Carthusian boys stole their meat from the little ones in that age, and Jack, for a great part of his school-time, lived on bread only, training himself, perhaps, by such means, to some of the asceticisms of his after life. In the year 1720, when he was seventeen, he went to Christ Church, Oxford. No-

thing can be more graceful or pleasant than the slight sketch which Southey gives of his early life at the university. There is a grace of natural piety in the young man's thoughtfulness, in his hesitations on the verge of life, in his constant recourse to father and mother for guidance, which is more pleasant to dwell upon than the passion of religious earnestness which soon swallowed up his life. When the time came at which it was necessary to decide upon his future career, he paused with natural reverence before taking orders, feeling the gravity of the decision. His father, with singular good sense, understood and appreciated his difficulties, and encouraged him to wait and work before taking any decisive step. His mother, on the other hand, with the practical sense which belongs to such women, thought the stimulus of a decided vocation would be of use to her boy. "Resolve to make religion the business of your life," she writes. "I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have the satisfaction of knowing, it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in any tragedy."

Nor was it only on such important matters that he turned homeward for advice. There is indeed in his life, as in that of most emphatically religious men, a certain want of perspective, if we may use the word —an absence of the ordinary variety of level which

marks the more or less momentous incidents of life. His difficulties about Thomas A'Kempis seem to bulk as large in his mind as those about his ordination; and on the smaller difficulty as well as the greater he receives home counsel, once more varied according to the characteristic peculiarities of father and mother. He could not agree with A'Kempis, the young man lamented; he could not feel that mirth and pleasure were useless or sinful, as does the author of the *Imitatione*. Mrs Wesley agrees with him in her reply, summing up her argument with a maxim which is both pious and wise, "Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure," she says, "take this rule: whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things—in short, whatever increases the strength or authority of the body over the mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself." The father, on the other hand, now growing old, takes a less cheerful view; he reminds his boy that "mortification is an indispensable Christian duty," and that a young man must be made to remember "that for all these things God will bring him into judgment." The book had been his own "great and old companion," and it was full of "heroic strains of humility, piety, and devotion." But he concludes by referring Jack to his mother, who "had leisure to boult the matter to the bran."

Such leisure was now wanting to her husband.

"Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is but a little way behind him," he says. "My eyes and heart are now almost all I have left, and I bless God for them." His advice in this last stage of his life is full of a softened tenderness. "If you love yourself or me, pray heartily," he says; and at a later period, when his son gained his fellowship, the old man's voice sounds pathetic in its exultation; "What will be my own fate before the summer be over, God knows; *sed passi graviora*—wherever I am my Jack is fellow of Lincoln." The two thus standing at either side of the young life, watching with equal tenderness, throwing in words of experience and love, and often of practical wisdom, to keep their son in the straight way, gives by far the most beautiful human aspect which it ever wears to Wesley's history. Their influence is so equal, yet so characteristically different in expression, so sensible, so full of that minute and detailed consideration of his feelings and thoughts which perhaps only the love of father and mother can give, that the heart of the spectator is moved, as it has but too little occasion to be in the after record. The father comforts his son about the Athanasian creed by a fine distinction which savours of the schools—the favourite distinction of the Church of Rome—between "wilful" and "involuntary" heresy; while the mother softly discourages too deep a consideration of those articles of the Church which support the doctrine of predestination, assuring him that "such studies tend more

to confound than to inform the understanding." When the young man's religious convictions impel him to a severer life than usual, his father tells him it is callow virtue that cannot bear to be laughed at; while the mother, half indignant at even so mild a stigma on her son's fortitude, adds, "If it be a weak virtue that cannot bear being laughed at, I am sure it is a strong and well-confirmed virtue that can stand the test of a brisk buffoonery;" and counsels her boy, whom she at least cannot bear to have ridiculed, "to shun the company of profane wits." Such is the mingled influence which colours the current of the young man's life. Happy the youth who has such counsellors, and understands his good fortune in having them! The only thing that casts a shadow on the picture is the extraordinary fact that Wesley, their son, lived to believe that this wise, tender, and most Christian pair were unenlightened, *unconverted* sinners at the very time when they were thus guiding his feet into every good and perfect way.

It was Jeremy Taylor, the most human and kindly of ascetics, who finally moved the wavering youthful soul into that entire self-consecration which decided his life. The *Holy Living and Dying* worked upon him like a revelation. "Instantly I resolved to dedicate *all* my life to God," Wesley himself says, "being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that every part of my life (not *some* only) must either be a sacrifice to God or myself—that is, in effect, to the devil." This decision immediately made itself visible

in his outward habits. Before his ordination in 1725, he had formed for himself a system of life in which many features of extreme High-Churchmanship are woven in with much of that minute self-inquiry and study of moods and feelings which we have since learned to identify chiefly with the other extreme of religious opinion in England. He communicated every week; he withdrew from all society which was not distinctly religious, and gave himself over to that anxious pursuit of perfection which so often turns the eye inward instead of upward, and loses life itself, and such gleams of heaven as are possible on earth, for the hope of a fuller entry into blessedness hereafter. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, for a young man to take this step without acquiring more or less that appearance of conscious spiritual superiority which it is so hard to get rid of and so fatal to possess: "When it pleased God to give me a settled resolution to be, not a nominal but a real Christian (being then about twenty-two years of age)," he says, "my acquaintance were as ignorant of God as myself. But there was this difference: I knew my ignorance; they did not know theirs."

Wesley's first step in active life was that of serving the little curacy of Wroote, which his father held in conjunction with Epworth, but which his age and weakness prevented him from himself attending to. Here he seems to have spent a year or two in profitable obscurity, receiving priest's orders, and completing his preparation for the stormy existence on

the verge of which he stood. No doubt, while thus brought face to face with rural godlessness, and making practical acquaintance with the deep-rooted profanity of the time, Wesley found out how incapable was the comfortable piety in which he had been brought up of rousing and re-creating the immense dull hopeless mass of unbelief and wickedness. There seems little record of this time of retirement; but it could not be other than a turning-point in his life. That longing for seclusion which belongs to the phase of religious development he had now reached, had come upon him. Had he been a Roman Catholic, no doubt he would have betaken himself to some hermit's cave to consider all the momentous questions with which his brain was teeming. Before going to Wroote, indeed, he had entertained hopes of being appointed to a school in one of the Yorkshire dales, which was described to him as a retreat from the world, with "little company to be expected from without, and none within." The idea of retirement pleased his fancy so much that he breaks into verse when writing of it, and anticipates his own satisfaction in giving voice to the inarticulate harmonies of nature.

> "These praise their Maker as they can,
> But want and ask the tongue of man,"

he says, with a certain youthful *élan* towards the novel existence; but has to content himself instead with the muddy ways and heavy souls of Wroote, and to fight his battle as he can, in the fervours and disgusts of

youth, among the Lincolnshire boors, with whom he had been familiar all his life. On one occasion, it is recorded, he "travelled many miles" to see a "serious" person in the barren and careless countryside. "Sir," said this man to the young priest, "you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve him alone; you must therefore *find* companions or *make* them: the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." These were pregnant words, and must have thrown a new light upon the world which had begun to struggle out of chaos in the young man's perceptions. There is no more talk of retirement or seclusion in his maturing life.

But it is curious enough to find that the first step towards making those companions, whose society Wesley had thus been directed to seek, was taken by his younger brother Charles, then an undergraduate at Christ Church, who had himself been awakened into deep religious earnestness, and had obeyed the promptings of his warmer social nature by drawing together a few fellow-students in the same circumstances as himself. These young men, moved by the first thrill of that tide of feeling which was soon to sweep all over England, had the courage to separate themselves from the mass of young bucks and bloods, the roystering "men" of their day, and to form themselves into an almost monastic brotherhood, to the amazement of the University. Times have changed wonderfully since then; we are not unaccustomed now to the severe youthful virtue of the tender

Ritualist, or to that curious pagan pietism which distinguishes the sect of young philosophers; but even at the present time such a brotherhood could scarcely originate without some ridicule from the surrounding crowd. It was the object of ceaseless darts of wit and a storm of merrymaking in that irreligious age. "They were called in derision the Sacramentarians, Bible-bigots, Bible-moths, the Holy or the Godly Club." One of their critics, less virulent than the rest, applied to them an old name fallen into disuse, which, indeed, is far from describing the character of unregulated enthusiasm and emotional excess which was then and after attributed to the young Pietists. This name was that of Methodists—a title lightly given, with little perception of the importance it was to assume. To take it according to its etymology, it might as well have been applied to the followers of Benedict or Francis as to those of John Wesley; and, in fact, this movement, of which no one foresaw the importance, was at its beginning much more like the foundation of a monastic order than anything else. Had Wesley (we repeat) been a Roman Catholic, from his hermitage he would have come forth like Benedict to form a great community. His country, his race, and birth were, however, too many for him. There are few notable lives in which one can trace so clearly the modifying influence of circumstances. A body more opposed to Rome could scarcely be than the religious society which acknowledges Wesley as its founder, and yet no society could be

more evidently established on the very principles of Rome.

When the young Reformer returned to Oxford to his university duties in 1728, he was received at once as the spiritual director of the little brotherhood, an office hitherto unknown among Protestants. Under his guidance the brethren fasted and prayed and devoted themselves to alms and charity; "they regularly visited the prisoners and the sick; communicated once a-week; and fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, the stationary days of the ancient Church, which were thus set apart because on these days our Saviour had been betrayed and crucified. They also drew up a scheme of self-examination, to assist themselves, by means of prayer and meditation, in attaining simplicity and the love of God." Their principle was to "live by rule, and to pick up the very fragments of time that not a moment might be lost." This Scheme of Self-Examination, which, unfortunately we have not room to quote, was divided into two tables like the Decalogue itself; and was a searching self-inquisition into every passing thought and movement of both mind and body. Its rules are almost identical with those of the mystic codes of monastic piety, as indeed they are with the expression of all intense religious feeling, when driven, if we may say so, to a desperate stand against the world. It is impossible to doubt that the mind must be injured, and its grace and spontaneity destroyed, by such perpetual and minute self-inspection; but it must always be remem-

bered that such rules originate in times of desperation, when the standard which has to be set up before the enemy must be painted in the boldest colours, and when human nature cannot refuse itself a certain exaggeration. Moderation and good sense are well in their way, and so is the natural involuntary grace of those sweet souls who sometimes seem from their cradles to share the tenderness and indulgence as well as the purity of their Divine Master. But such are not the fiery captains, the forlorn hope, of Christianity; and at this moment John Wesley's little band of young, extravagant, ascetic knights-errant was England's forlorn hope.

Not without certain picturesque circumstances, such as attend intense bravery and resolution at all times, did the brotherhood pursue its course. On the Sundays an eager-eyed boy, homeliest of poor students, a servitor of Pembroke, by name George Whitfield, hereafter to be one of their leaders, watched them wistfully as they made their way through the jeers of the crowd to St Mary's, to receive the communion, longing, poor lad, to follow, and not disinclined at the same moment to bestow a stray buffet on the foul mouths that laughed at the young saints. They were hailed by many an anxious prisoner as the only Christian faces that ever looked in pitifully upon the reeking squalor of an eighteenth-century jail. The sick and the poor watched for them as they passed. They taught themselves in a nerveless age the disused art of walking, to save money for

their pensioners; and went without powder, with long locks hanging on their young shoulders, with a delightful boyish folly, to have a few pence the more for the same blessed purpose. The father-confessor was but twenty-five, and still turned his face towards his home for continual counsel in his spiritual difficulties. It is with a smile and a tear that the spectator looks upon the lads in their excess of zeal. Why should it be less beautiful than other youthful enthusiasms because it was for the cause of all others most important? At such a white heat of devotion, no man, perhaps not even a monk, could remain and live. But while it lasts the young dream is sublime. To "recover the image of God"—that was their object; and to communicate the desire for this recovery and the means of attaining it to all the world. If there was something to pardon, certain it is that we forgive many extravagances for objects much less divine.

The first intention of these young ascetics was to pursue their legitimate studies steadily, while adding to them this strange new practice of piety; but in the heat of their self-communings new questions arose. They began to doubt whether carnal learning was a lawful pursuit, or whether they were justified in thus employing time on which there were more urgent calls. With a new anxiety in his mind, Wesley writes to his mother on this subject. He proposes the question to all who can understand it:

"And why not to you rather than any?" he says. "Shall I quite break off my pursuit of all learning but what immediately

tends to practice? I once desired to make a fair show in languages and philosophy, but it is past. There is a more excellent way; and if I cannot attain to any progress in the one, without throwing up all thoughts of the other, why, fare it well! . . . I am to renounce the world, to draw off my affections from the world, and fix them on a better; but how? What is the surest and the shortest way? . . . In many things you have interceded for me and prevailed; who knows but in this too you may be successful? If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart as it was then for forming my judgment."

The answer to this appeal does not seem to have been preserved; but as the fervour of mysticism grew, the old father, though full of pride and joy in the devotion of his son, interposes a warning note in the midst of his satisfaction. "Be not highminded," he says; "preserve an equal temper of mind under whatever treatment you meet with from a not very just or well-natured world. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady." Nothing could be more needful than this advice; but it was given at a time when the mind of the young man was inaccessible to any counsel but that which chimed in with his own desires. For a time he goes on in his perilous career, not with less but more sail, concentrating himself within the narrow limits he had chalked out. One of his little band before long, worn by voluntary privation, sickened unto death, and Wesley himself seemed in a fair way to follow. Constant fasting, not even diversified by generous fare on a festival; con-

stant work, perpetual self-communion, scruples about this duty or that, watching, exhortation, the continual intense strain of body and mind—brought his vitality down to the lowest level. His mind, absorbed with the awful but narrow anxiety to secure personal salvation at any cost, his body worn and strained to its utmost, his soul full of a perpetual feverish excitement, it soon became apparent to his friends, that a crisis was approaching. The movement in its first shape had gone as far as mortal powers would permit. His little brotherhood began to fail him, having come to the limit of their strength. One became afraid of the ever-growing singularity (a poor-spirited disciple this) of the position; one had been seduced into philosophy, and lost his reverence for the authority over him; one had been converted from fasting by fever and a physician. Instead of seven-and-twenty devout and hollow-eyed brethren, the young ascetic found but five on his return after a short absence. The bitterness of this mortification but intensified his personal zeal. He clung with desperation to the post he held after it had ceased to be tenable. "For friends, they were either trifling or serious; if triflers, fare them well, a noble escape; if serious, those who are more serious are left," he says, evidently with the pang of disappointment in his heart. The brotherhood had broken down, but its head held the faster to his lost standing-ground.

The mortification of a forsaken leader is in the tenacity with which he rejects all overtures to whole-

some work elsewhere. His father, from his deathbed, pleads with him to take the living of Epworth, and carry out the work to which he himself had devoted forty years of his life. He asks pathetically whether his son can look on with indifference, and see his long labour lost, the fences of God's vineyard broken down, and "a mighty Nimrod," a certain Mr M., brought in to complete the havoc; whether he can despise "the dear love and longing" of the people, the comfort of his mother, a hundred tender reasons. He might as well have prayed a beaten and embittered general to take the peaceful plough in hand, instead of trying another wild campaign to redeem his fortune. With a certain acerbity, from the seclusion of his college, Wesley replies to these affectionate entreaties. With curious spiritual egotism, which is evidently a cover for wounded feeling, he declares that his own salvation would be impossible at Epworth; that he could not stand his ground there for a month against intemperance in sleeping, eating, and drinking; and adds, with growing heat, that the company of ordinary good men would be fatal to him. "They undermine insensibly all my resolutions, and quite steal from me the little fervour I have. I never come from among those saints of the world (as John Valdesso calls them), faint, dissipated, and shorn of all my strength, but I say, God deliver me from a half Christian!" he cries, with a shrill of sharp and bitter feeling in his voice. The self-pity and the self-assertion of a wounded spirit are alike strong in these words. He

will listen to no reasons, however cogent—he will save himself, though no man cares to be saved with him—he will hug contempt to his bosom, since he is born to be contemned—he will cling to Oxford though Oxford does not want him. As for the love of the people at Epworth, he cries, with the same perverse ingenuity of a mind set on edge, "How long will it last? Only till I come and tell them plainly that their deeds are evil, and to make a particular application of that general sentence, to say to each, *Thou art the man.*"

Thus he resists with a kind of desperation the attempt to draw him into sober work, and the responsibilities of a social position. Whether any touch of more human selfishness lay below—whether he was reluctant to take upon himself the care of his mother and sisters, which was one of the inducements urged upon him to accept the cure of Epworth—the story says nothing. The tone of injury which runs through his self-defence might have been natural enough in the case of a young man asked to sacrifice his own affections in order to keep up the family home. But there is no whisper of disappointed love in the record. He fights against the fate he disliked with an acrid energy, probably drawn only from the disturbed state of his own mind, from the darkening of the sky over him, the desertion of his disciples, the sickening doubt in his own spirit as to what this course of mysticism could come to; and so, fiercely, throws away the calm domestic life, the moderate rural work,

the comfort and quiet thus pressed upon him—giving bitter selfish reasons, half-consciously sophistical, not knowing what he is doing, following out unawares the thread of a destiny unforeseen.

Why Wesley should, not more than a year after this decision, have accepted the office of missionary to Georgia, it is very difficult to perceive. He resisted, we are told; but his resistance must have been feeble in comparison with the stand he made against his father. Perhaps the death of the old man, which had taken place in the mean time, had tuned him to a softer key; perhaps his wound had healed with time, and his self-will become less obstinate; or perhaps the romance of a mission to savages moved the excited soul, which felt itself unable to contend with the ordinary matters of life. It is comprehensible that such a man, absorbed in the ebbs and tides of his own spiritual feeling, should have had no eye for the supreme difficulty of a missionary's work, or his own utter want of adaptation to such a mission. He thought he "would have the advantage of preaching to a people not yet beguiled by philosophy and vain deceit." "Our end," he says, "in leaving our native country was not to avoid want (God having given us plenty of temporal blessings), nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honour, but simply this—to save our souls; to live wholly to the glory of God." Thus curiously does the apostle go forth putting the selfish motive first, by an amazing inadvertence of words, in which most modern apostles, but neither

Peter nor Paul, join him. To save his soul!—not out of love to God or love to man—a strange example of the way in which good people insist on putting forward the meaner motive—not in their hearts, whatever they may say, but in their words.

This mission lasted a little more than two years, and it cannot be called in the smallest degree a successful one. So far as preaching to the Indians was concerned, Wesley never attempted it, for he did not even begin to learn their language. He became chaplain to the colonists, a very different office, and made his appearance among them in some such fashion as a flaming Ritualist of the present day might make his entry into an Evangelical parish. His austerities and High-Churchmanship seem to have done more to puzzle the not very fastidious society of the new colony than his devotion did to enlighten them. He insisted on immersing the baby Georgians who were brought to him for baptism. He refused to bury the dead who had not been baptised in the Church of England, and shut out from the communion-table the devoutest Christian who could not stand this test. With that curious want of discrimination which distinguished him, he mixed up paltry matters of detail with great Christian principles, preaching sermons one day against depravity and drunkenness, the next against the pretty dresses with which the colonial ladies came to church on Sunday. At first the novelty of such plain-speaking seems to have impressed his hearers. In

the latter particular, for example, after he had "expounded the Scriptures which relate to dress, and pressed them freely on my audience in a plain and close application," the effect was such that "all the time that I afterwards ministered at Savannah I saw neither gold in the church nor costly apparel, but the congregation in general was almost constantly clothed in plain clean linen or woollen." At another time he had public prayers at church while a dance was going on, and emptied the ball-room. Such duels between the Church and the world, though sometimes momentarily successful, are neither discreet nor dignified, and Wesley went from step to step until he had alienated and disgusted the greater part of his flock. He preached *at* his parishioners, or so at least they thought, "making his sermons so many satires upon particular persons." He interfered in family quarrels and the broils of social life. He induced the Governor to make paltry and harassing laws touching Sabbath observance, and then vexed his soul with complaints against transgressors of them. Such are the sins alleged against him, and they are not at all out of keeping with his character on the one hand, and quite sufficient to account for his loss of reputation in the colony on the other. His brother Charles, who had accompanied him, had even a worse fate. Running a-tilt against everybody's prejudices, making mountains out of molehills, and with no toleration for the inevitable shortcomings of a newly-formed society, the two brothers armed

everybody's hand against them. It was their first encounter with the practical difficulties of life, and a more entire failure could not be conceived. They had come from their classic seclusion full of the conscious importance and solemnity of apostles, just heightened by that ineffable greatness which hedges in a college Don. And the colonists, blind wretches, did not see it, but treated the young priests like any other clergymen, growing impatient under their censures and angry with their interference. It must have been at once a surprise and a disappointment to the young Reformer. Instead of planting the faith among the Indians, and stirring the colonists into an austere life of prayer and fasting, he left the American shores, all but driven out, without a single reclaimed savage to witness his work, or grateful Georgian to cherish his name. It would be strange if a man of any candour of mind had kept faith in his own system after such a downfall.

His work in the colony, however, though unfruitful to his flock, was not unfruitful to Wesley himself. It was there he came in contact with the Moravian brotherhood, a community regulated by the rules of semi-monastic devotion which were so dear to his heart; but of a serenity and calm of faith, and consequent sweetness of spiritual temper, such as he had never been able to attain. All these years, while practising with an anxious heart the utmost rigours of self-discipline, he had been continually disturbed by doubts, which grew more dreadful when any

danger threatened him, and paralysed his spirit in many an emergency without teaching him to be merciful to others in similar weakness. In his agitated state of mind the very sight of the Moravians was at once a comfort and a reproach to him—he could not understand their calm, their love of God in which no terror mingled — their genuine humbleness and meekness; while they in their turn looked with a mild surprise upon the excited feverish Englishman who subjected himself to such religious discipline, and had so little real peace. One of them, to whom he appealed for advice, asked him such plain and simple questions as made the ascetic, who hitherto had taught everybody round him, falter and tremble. "Do you know Jesus Christ? do you know He has saved you? do you know yourself?" asked the German; and Wesley answered with a hesitation he could not explain, feeling his heart rise within him in wild self-inquiry and discontent. His mind recurred to them when he was thrown again upon the world, and had once more to set in order and reconsider his life on leaving America—and it was their hands which gave the final form and perfection, both to his character and his work.

This period of his life must not, however, be passed over without a passing reference to the curious little romance, the only one in his life, which here weaves itself into the unexpanding story. Among the ladies of the colony was a certain Miss Sophy, who, either moved by genuine liking for the preacher, or by a

coquette's desire to vanquish all, or, as Wesley's historians say, by a deep-laid scheme to tempt him out of his austerities, gave herself a great deal of trouble to reach the heart of the austere young saint. It is an office which some woman generally undertakes either for good or evil in the life of most confessors. She became his penitent, with religious difficulties to solve; and his pupil, with a pretty thirst for knowledge. She "dressed always in white, and with the utmost simplicity, to please his taste"—she nursed him through a fever. The young man fell a victim to these wiles. It seems very doubtful whether she had any intention in the whole matter but that of amusing herself, as wicked young women will. When they had a quarrel she threatened to return to England, and brought the poor priest to his knees, half to heaven to move her to remain, half to her to stay. His heart was torn with love and doubt and much tribulation. On one occasion he records that "I advised Miss Sophy to sup earlier, and not immediately before she went to bed. She did so; and on this little circumstance," adds the lover, with quaint unconscious comicality, "what an inconceivable train of consequences depend." But though thus observant of his wishes in respect to supper, Miss Sophy was not fully satisfactory to himself, and much less to his friends. At last, with a strange exhibition of the utter want at once of passion and of delicacy in his nature, Wesley determined to submit the question, whether or not he should propose to marry her, *to the*

Moravian Church! The elders sat upon it in solemn conclave, and advised him to proceed no further in the business. "The will of the Lord be done," said the pious suitor. And yet it cost him a pang. On "March 4," the day of this meeting, he says in his journal, "God commanded me to pull out my right eye, and by his grace I determined to do so; but being slack in the execution, March 12, God being very merciful to me, my friend performed what I could not." This latter ambiguous sentence means that Miss Sophy on that day put him out of pain by marrying another—a tolerably clear indication that her sport with the poor clerical mouse had been but a cruel play. It is evident that he felt this bitterly, being perhaps wounded in his self-love as well as his affections to find that while he was debating the possibility of giving her up as a religious duty, she was preparing for another union. "It was the day which completed the year from my first speaking to her," says Wesley; adding piteously, "What thou doest, O God, I know not now, but I shall know hereafter!" "The word of the Lord was come to me likewise," he adds with evident reality of feeling, "saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. The difficulty of obeying such a direction appeared to me now more than ever before," says the wounded and mournful lover. It is the only moment in which his heart shows itself, and the very simplicity of the

plaint makes it more touching. The story has the strangest conclusion that ever wound up a tale of unrequited love. He could not be done with his false love though she had forsaken him. After a while we find him reproving her according to his ancient custom: but the wife did not accept the reproof as the maiden Sophy had done, and the consequence was that he took the rash and unaccountable step of refusing her admittance to the communion-table. This was the immediate cause of his half-flight half-expulsion from Georgia. The story is characteristic throughout, and not more so in its beginning than in its close.

The voyage home was a very trying and troubled time for Wesley—perhaps there was still the thorn rankling in this wound, though he speaks of it no more; but there was, at least, the deep discomfiture of unsuccess, and a profound discontent with himself and his religious state. His mind was tossed upon a wild sea of doubt and uncertainty, while his outer man sustained all the stormy vicissitudes of the Atlantic. He utters his soul on his landing with pathetic sincerity:—

"It is now," he says, "two years and four months since I left my native country to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learnt myself meantime? Why, what I the least of all suspected, that I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted to God. I am not mad though I thus speak, but I speak the words of truth and soberness; if haply some of those who still dream may awake and see that as I am so are they. Are they read in philosophy?

so was I. In ancient or modern tongues? so was I also. Are they versed in the science of divinity? I, too, have studied it many years. Can they talk fluently upon spiritual things? the very same could I do. Are they plenteous in alms? behold, I gave all my goods to feed the poor. Do they give of their labour as well as their substance? I have laboured more abundantly than them all. Are they willing to suffer for their brethren? I have thrown up my friends, reputation, ease, country. I have put my life in my hand, wandering into strange lands. I have given my body to be devoured by the deep, parched up with heat, consumed by toil or weariness, or whatsoever God shall please to bring upon me. But does all this, be it more or less, make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in His sight? . . . This, then, I have learned in the ends of the earth."

Though there is a certain grandiloquence in the words, yet the boast was no vain one; he had intended all he asserts; and though no doubt his own self-will, imperious temper, and undiscriminating zeal had been at the bottom of his sufferings, there is something touching in the return of the self-disgusted missionary, half heart-broken, bowed down by failure, disappointment, and grief, painfully parting with his old hopes, painfully schooling himself to a humility more real than asceticism. "I have no hope but that of being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," he says, as if it were some new discovery. One would have supposed he had believed so all along, and yet he states the truth as but acquired now.

He came home in this broken condition to find, strangely enough, his true work begun. It is evident

he had no thought or idea of any mission waiting for him in England when he landed disconsolate on the white cliffs once more. A general discouragement overwhelmed him. On his way into the port he passed an outward-bound vessel waiting a favourable wind, in which, he ascertained on landing, George Whitfield, his disciple and deputy, was on his way to Georgia, where Wesley himself had called him. The apostle who had been driven out of the colony could not let his brother go without an effort to detain him. He went, as he would himself have said, to God with his burden, and, after much prayer, with the strangest mixture of childishness and solemnity, drew a lot which was to decide the matter. Immediately after a messenger was despatched to the ship with a letter to the outgoing preacher. "When I saw God by the wind which was carrying you out brought me in, I asked counsel of God. His answer you have enclosed." The enclosure was a slip of paper with this sentence, "Let him return to London." This strange command does not seem to have reached Whitfield until some months later, when he was settled in Georgia, conciliating with his softer temper and less arrogant manners the flock which Wesley had set by the ears. And he does not seem to have paid any attention to it; but it is a very singular instance of the arbitrary sway which the religious leader felt himself entitled to exercise, and the spark of vindictiveness which lingered in his pious bosom.

Having sent forth this ordinance, Wesley went on

sadly to London, sore with his downfall, burdened with unsettled convictions. With an attempt to preach himself, if nobody else, into a clearer faith, he opened his lips once more in an English pulpit, taking as his subject the new birth which he yearned to have accomplished in his own being. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," was his text; and it is not difficult to imagine the heaviness of spirit with which the weary traveller, the unsuccessful missionary, the trembling and uncertain believer, uttered those uncompromising words. It was on the second day after his arrival in London; and he would seem to have been all but hopeless, wounded in heart and broken in spirit. But unconsciously he was taking up with a stronger grasp than that of a mere orator the thread of Whitfield's fervent and eloquent addresses. Whether it was his doctrine, which was strange to the contented moralists of the day; or whether there was in the earnestness of the preacher himself straining after the way of salvation an indecorous reality which shocked his calmer brethren, the result of this first sermon was that the pulpit in which it was preached was henceforward closed to Wesley. In the next which he entered, St Andrew's, Holborn, he met the same fate. No doubt he was a highly uncomfortable interlocutor in the satisfied circles of the slumbering church; and in all likelihood this prohibition helped to cheer and encourage the doubting preacher, by proving to him that he was still Christian enough and dan-

gerous enough to provoke the enmity of "the world."

Ere long, however, Wesley began to recover himself, to take courage, and perceive that a great mission was before him. At no time had he been inclined to underrate the importance of his own person and work; and when the horizon began to clear over him, all his characteristic energies awoke. By degrees, while steadily persisting in preaching to others, he found for himself the prize which he had long sought in vain. Another Moravian, Peter Boehler by name, seems to have completed the work which his community had begun; and half consciously, while stumbling along these doubtful paths, painfully finding out the way for himself, the predestined Reformer began again to collect a company of the faithful round him. Still less consciously he began to yield to the new influences by which he was surrounded; his thoughts ceased to move in the groove of High-Churchmanship; his heart "became so full that he could not confine himself to the forms of prayer" which were customarily used; and at an early period the instinct of a mind formed to organise and administer moved him into the formation of a little Church within the Church as it were, an innovation without warrant or precedent. Not content with the ordinary framework of a congregation, he classed his little band of converts in groups, and gave to them a certain novel shape and cohesion. The company thus organised amounted to forty or

fifty people, including a few stray Moravians. Their bond of union was a strange but very loyal allegiance to Wesley as their leader, and a rule drawn out for them "in obedience to the commands of God by St James, and by the advice of Peter Boehler." "They were to be divided into several bands or little companies, none consisting of fewer than five or more than ten persons; in these bands every one in order engaged to speak as plainly, freely, and concisely as he could the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances since the last meeting. . . . . Any person who desired admission into this society was to be asked what were his motives, whether he would be entirely open, using no kind of reserve, and whether he objected to any of the rules. The last article provided that no member should be allowed to act in anything contrary to any order of the society, and that any person who did not conform to those orders after being thrice admonished should no longer be esteemed a member."

Thus the germ of the great Society of Methodists, the largest dissenting community in existence, and the most orderly and symmetrical, came into being. Its constitution was modelled on that of the Moravians, from whom, however, it gradually diverged in its after-development. The little nucleus of these forty pious companions had within a few years thrown branches into every corner of England, and taken root in America and all the British colonies; and yet no intention of separate existence, no sense of the forma-

tion of an individual corporation, was in their minds. They did it with the strange unconsciousness of human nature, believing that they sought edification and advance in godliness alone. "Oh, what a work," cried Wesley, "has God begun! Such a one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth pass away." Nothing less than the revivification of the English Church and people was in his thoughts. And though it did not come about in the way he dreamed, there can be no doubt that the life which now swells and quickens in the English Establishment, a more vigorous life than that possessed by any other so-called Protestant Church, has received its great modern impulse from the rising tide of new vitality which warmed those little bands, and set up this curious, fervent, intolerable, righteous brotherhood in face of the world.

It was only after the formation of the "bands," the first beginnings of the body afterwards distinguished by his name, that Wesley declared himself at last *converted.* The event took place on Wednesday, May 28, 1738, about a quarter before nine in the evening (so minute is the record), when one of the humble brotherhood of the society in Aldersgate Street was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ. "I felt my heart strangely warmed," says Wesley; "I felt I did trust Christ — Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine,* and saved *me* from the law of

sin and death. . . . I then testified openly to all them what I now first felt in my heart." The announcement of this certainty perhaps does not strike the reader with the interest which a great event deserves. It rather startles and shakes than arouses his faith in the hero of the story; but then the reader has not felt all the violent vicissitudes of light and darkness through which Wesley's soul had passed; he has not been in alarm about the salvation of a man so manifestly labouring hard to serve God, however mistaken he may have been by times. It is evident that to Wesley himself the event was of the highest importance; but the news did nothing but vex and annoy everybody connected with him. We share the feelings of surprise and partial irritation with which the Huttons, good people, with whom he was living at the time, received the announcement. The master of the house had been calmly reading a sermon to his family on the Sunday evening, in the half-cloistered quiet of Dean's Yard at Westminster, when John Wesley suddenly stood up and announced to the confounded household that he had never been a Christian till within the last five days. Mr Hutton, stupefied by the intimation, called out with the alarm of a respectable Churchman, "Have a care, Mr Wesley, how you despise the benefits received by the two sacraments!" His wife, more ready-witted, answered with epigrammatic sharpness, "If you were not a Christian ever since I knew you, you were a great hypocrite, for

you made us all believe you were one"—a response which sums up what will be the feeling of most spectators on this difficult subject.

Sharper and warmer was the feeling of Samuel Wesley, the elder brother. He thinks it likely that Jack must be mad after such a statement: "Perpetual intenseness of thought and want of sleep may have disordered my brother," he says in his trouble. And good Mrs Hutton, anxious for an enthusiastic son of her own, who was being led astray, suggests that Wesley should be confined if not converted from this mad notion, "in charity to many honest, well-meaning, simple souls." Such was the effect upon his anxious friends; for the new convert, not content with proclaiming his own deliverance, had cast a firebrand among his companions by declaring that only in such a way—by personal revelation—conviction, *assurance*—could any man be saved. No wonder the good folks who walked humbly with their God, but had no revelations from heaven, should have been moved out of all patience. Wesley, however, left the domestic storm to rage itself out, and went away at this critical moment with his heart lightened of its load, and the glow of an assured and perfect faith warming his heart, to Saxony, to visit the house and sanctuary of his Moravian fathers in the faith.

Our space does not permit us to enter into his visit to Herrnhut, interesting and quaint as is the society he found there, the spotless, monotonous, serene little church of the Moravians, the only example of family

monasticism in the world. He learned much from them, and he learned that he could not be of them, or affiliate himself to their strange little hierarchy, having no mind to acknowledge any Pope but John Wesley in the world. And the Moravians had already their Pope in the person of Zinzendorf. When he returned he found his bands, though watched over by his brother Charles in his absence, had already got into trouble. They had begun to quarrel among themselves; and, to mend matters, had fallen foul of that doctrine of predestination which has driven so many good Christians frantic. His presence quelled the uproar almost as if by magic, and he soon found time to write a letter to his late hosts, taking them soundly to task for various matters which he disapproved of—a letter, however, which he had the discretion not to send. Nothing could be more singular than Wesley's position at this moment. He was the acknowledged head of a body of fervent Christians, their spiritual director and guide, holding an authority almost absolute over them: yet, while thus exercising something very like a spiritual episcopacy, he was a clergyman without regular duty, with no pulpit of his own, no cure of souls, no right to interfere in the instruction of the people. From this curious platform of unofficial authority he admonished everybody who came in his way, from the stone-breaker on a country roadside to the Bishop of London, whom he not only endeavoured to convert to his new views, but whom he took upon himself to make suggestions to,

urging upon him, for example (of all things in the world), the duty of re-baptising Dissenters! It does not seem to have occurred to him to seek a settled position of any kind. A clergyman without a cure, a preacher without a pulpit, a spiritual father supreme over his numerous penitents in what was then the most Protestant of Churches—could any position be more anomalous? And the society over which he ruled ripened in natural development from day to day; its members increased; its meetings became daily more agitated and exciting; a society which had seen, as it were, its Founder converted in its very midst—had seen the Holy Ghost descend upon him, and heard the outcry of his confession that only in that moment did he know God—who can wonder if every new-comer there, hoped, like Wesley, to be seized by some rushing fiery impulse—some divine flash of enlightenment, doing such a work as ages of mere duty could not accomplish? They told each other strange tales, such as he had told them, of the power of God in their souls. The very first rule of their system was that each individual should narrate weekly the secret story of his heart. Thus the fire burned, the excitement grew, and Wesley stood by watching it, throwing oil on the flames—his own position as exceptional, as unauthorised and unprecedented as theirs—a leader with no lawful commission—a churchman under no legitimate authority—a man out of all order of nature, born for the time.

For it is clear that all this unintentional lawlessness,

this wild vindication of the spirit against the letter, in its very extravagance was the impulse needed to disturb the settled composure of the age. What men had to be taught was—a lesson never unnecessary, but at some times urgent above all other needs—that the outside was not all, nor even the most important part, of the life of man; that to be made a Christian by "the two Sacraments" was not enough; nor to go to church of Sundays, nor even to read a sermon to your family on the evening of that heavy, slumberous, idle day. It was Wesley's mission to proclaim, with such trumpet as came to his hand, that all this and a world more, even personal goodness of a higher cast, even highest ritualism, asceticism, external self-denial, giving goods to the poor and body to be burnt, was not enough; that nothing but a man's heart and soul were fit offerings to God; that the invisible, the impalpable, the great world of mystery above and behind and around this speck of visible existence, was not less but more real than that existence itself. Such was the lesson he had to teach to a materialist age. He did it not with the wisdom of a sage, but with all the force, the energy, the foolishness, and high devotion of a true man. We are not called upon to admire or to adopt his rhapsodies, the visions of his disciples, the peculiarities of his doctrine, any more than we are required to approve the arrogance and imperiousness which were the natural defects of his character. We can only say such was his work in the world. He did it imperfectly and

wildly;—he might have chosen a better way—he might have been less rude, less extravagant, more shapely and gracious in the letters of fire he had to write for us upon the wall. But the handwriting he traced with faltering finger was the message of God most needful to the world. He did it half unawares, involuntarily, not knowing what was to come of it; but with all his faults upon his head, he did it thoroughly and well.

The height of excitement to which the new inspiration of the brotherhood rose may be indicated by a brief account given by Wesley of one of their meetings just after the return of Whitfield to England:—

"On the first night of the New Year," he says, "Mr Hall, Kinchine, Ingham, Whitfield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at a love-feast, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His Majesty, we broke out with one voice, '*We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.*'"

The names quoted here are almost all those of clergymen. Such a passion of religious earnestness could not be shut up within the narrow limits of the bands. The church, as a whole, looked coldly on, shutting its pulpit-doors—at the best, sneering with the world at the Methodists, monasticists, men of the Rule, who stood up in its midst in such wild raptures, proclaiming their fellowship with God. They should

have but little fellowship with man, said the phalanx of orderly clergymen standing close and shutting their ranks. The Bishops, though very mild and tolerant, could not be supposed to be specially inclined towards the insubordinate priests who were ready at a moment's notice to convert them, or "deal faithfully" with their souls. And it was not possible that so many educated men, trained to active work — not to speak of the still less restrainable fervour of the humbler brethren who thus felt themselves raised to the rank of prophets and made a special people in the midst of a darkened world—could content themselves long with the monotonous existence of love-feasts and watchnights in one obscure and limited circle. It was Whitfield who first broke through the charmed circle. Less bound by the punctilios of professional etiquette, with less standing to lose, and free by his lowly birth and breeding from many of the traditions of clerical respectability which bound the Wesleys, Whitfield followed the warm impulse within him without thought of policy or fear of results. The colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, were proverbial for their savage character and brutality. They had no place of worship near them, and nobody so much as dreamt of inquiring whether by chance they too might have souls to be saved. The wandering Evangelist saw, and with that instinct or inspiration which in a great crisis often seems to direct the instrument of Providence, saw his opportunity at a glance. On the afternoon of Saturday, February 17,

1739, breaking the iron decorum of the Church, but not a single thread of the allegiance which bound him to her, he took his stand on a little summit in the benighted heathen district, and proclaimed to the gaping, amazed populace the message they had never heard before. Ere long, thousands gathered round him, eager to see so new a thing, to hear so strange a communication. Under the spring sunshine they gathered "in an awful manner, in the profoundest silence," says the preacher, moved to the heart by the unhoped-for magnitude of his own work. The rude miners stood still as death, turning their dark countenances towards him, weeping white tears down their grimy, coal-stained cheeks. Never since bare-footed friars had wandered that way, with the wide and elastic commission of Rome, had preachers stood in England by field and hedgerows, calling the lost sheep to the fold. The eighteenth-century preacher, in his curled wig and comely bands, is no such picturesque figure as the Franciscan; but yet nothing could have been more impressive than the scenes he describes with an evident awe upon his own mind. "The trees and hedges were full," he says. "All was hushed when I began." Sometimes as many as twenty thousand collected around the little hill—at times a thrill of emotion ran through the crowd. They wept aloud together over their sins; they sang together with that wonderful voice of a multitude which has something in it more impressive than any music. The sun fell aslant over the sea of heads, the

"solemnity of approaching evening" stole over the strange scene. Through the preacher's minute, monotonous diary, there throbs a sudden fulness of human feeling as he records it. It was sometimes "almost too much" for him. And as he tells us the story at this long distance, we are still touched by the tears in his voice.

This was the first outburst of the new light upon the outer world. Hitherto it had been limited, shining as it were underground, in obscure corners, where a pulpit could be found, or a few faithful persons gathered together. It is very difficult to disentangle the thread of Wesley's life at this moment from that of the simpler, humbler, sweeter, less conventional soul which acted as his pioneer, and began with a kind of splendid inadvertence his greatest efforts. Whitfield went forth in quaint evangelical simplicity, and did what his hand found to do, rather hoping to be persecuted for it, caring no more for his character or standing than had he possessed neither; and when the rough work was done, sent for his leader with a loyalty little to be expected under the circumstances, yet such as Wesley seemed to have had some innate faculty of winning. When the work at Kingswood had reached the vast proportions just described, the preacher wrote urgent letters, begging his Pope and brother to come down and enter on his labours. Then there ensued a curious scene. No doubt Wesley's soul thirsted to enter upon this new mode of work, which would open all England to him, and un-

loose in a moment the conventional bonds in which he was still tied. But ought he to do it? At this grand crisis, the most important in his life, Wesley took the strangest way of deciding his fate. He consulted the Bible—that is, he used it as an oracle, as he had done in former cases, resolved to be guided by the texts he should light upon. The texts were of the most uncomfortable character. They seem to warn him of a fatal issue to his mission. "I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake," was one, and the most intelligible. At last, after many determined efforts to make the sacred pages second his own wishes, he took refuge in direct drawing of lots, and by this trustworthy method was instructed to go. The members of the society, however, who appear to have from a very early period exacted payment from Wesley for their obedience to him, by unlimited babble about his affairs, took to the oracle again; and eliciting the fact from their Bibles that "Ahaz slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem," took leave of their leader mournfully, believing him doomed to death. Such was also his own conviction. He set out in unfaltering obedience to the lot, but with the feeling of a doomed man, leaving his blessing behind him; and so brought himself into contact with the freer air again, and once more carried his Gospel, such as it had warmed, and changed, and developed into, to the world.

His feelings on getting down to the field of action

were of a curious, complicated kind. "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way," he says, "having been all my life, till very lately, so timorous of every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." His heart stirred in him more and more as he sat by and saw the great assembly gather, and dauntless Whitfield, not concerned about such punctilios, preach to them with his usual fervour. The mind of Wesley goes on working through it all with that curious power of modification in opinion, following the tenor of his wishes, which is common to humanity. Next day he remarks to himself, having evidently travelled a long way in the mean time, that our Lord's Sermon on the Mount was "one pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching; and I suppose there were churches at that time also," he adds, meeting his own scruples as they arise. On the third day he had mastered the controversy and took the decisive step. "I submitted to be more vile," he says, "and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation." Such was the issue—a result easily to be foreseen; for it is amazing how texts and doctrines and opinions, however apparently hostile, all fuse and melt into arguments for the step which a man in his secret heart all the time desires to take.

As soon as Wesley began to preach thus in Bristol and its neighbourhood, a great outbreak of the strange phenomena which generally attend the beginning of

every great religious movement took place. People were seized upon whilst listening to his preaching by paroxysms of nervous emotion, often reaching the length of positive convulsion fits. They "cried out and shouted as in the agonies of death." They fell on their faces on the ground; they poured forth sometimes wild blasphemies, sometimes as wild confessions of sin. They "roared for the disquietness of their heart," says the preacher, describing the extraordinary scene which daily took place around him. Such scenes have not yet vanished from among us. The present writer witnessed many years ago with the wonder, half-consternation, half-belief of youth, a band of devout Methodists kneeling round a groaning prostrate figure, adjuring God, by every kind of wild argument, to save the sinner *now*. "Now, Lord!" shouted these grandchildren of the disciples of Wesley, with an excitement of eagerness which no doubt was chiefly traditionary, an inheritance from the period when Wesley and his brethren threw themselves on their knees around the convulsionist just struck down in their midst, and "ceased not calling upon God till He raised him up full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." Southey is very hard upon his hero for these singular manifestations. The poet takes it for granted they were impositions, not reflecting how rare a successful imposition is; or attributes the strange effect to fanaticism or enthusiasm, not perceiving that this throws no light whatever on the mystery, but simply shifts its ground. Since his day we have made at

least the advance, if advance it is, of looking upon even such exciting matters with unprejudiced eyes, not to condemn, but to see what is in them. And though they are still unexplained, and like to remain so, it is very clear that they were no impositions. From the days of John the Baptist till now, such incidents have made themselves visible, wherever a new voice like that of him in the wilderness has come, rousing the world into a revival of religious life. They were new in England, and no doubt were perniciously fostered by the very principles of the society, which encouraged, and indeed commanded, every man to lay bare his personal experience. But how John Wesley — himself (as he believed) converted in an instant by a flash of light from heaven — could be expected to reject the evidence of men to whom the same light came, only with a more violent illumination, producing effects more startling in appearance, but not more momentous, it would be hard to say. On the contrary, he was bound to believe them, and he did believe.

His preachings were thus made the occasion of wild and wonderful scenes, exhibitions of the strangest and most indecorous emotion. We stand at our ease and blame him for his ready belief and adoption of all these wonders; but for a man bred in that age, and holding the principles he did, we do not see what else he could have done. His brother Samuel, evidently a most well-meaning, sober-minded man, but with no special call or mission to the world, vexed

the soul of the Reformer at this period with long-winded letters upon these phenomena. In the very midst of his exciting and laborious life this correspondence comes in, full of an anxious and not unkindly or unthoughtful endeavour to make him believe that his work is foolishness, and his followers impostors or madmen. We cannot but feel that Wesley has the best of the controversy, however impressed we may be by the good sense and moderation of his brother. He says, with natural warmth, that these effects were not outward only, or he would not believe in them, but that they were followed by entire and undeniable reformation of life, the strongest argument that could be adduced in their favour. It was the same Samuel Wesley who suggested that his mother should dig in the spot where the Epworth ghost had seemed to pour money at her feet, who made this opposition, a man consequently not in the least sceptical as to supernatural interference in the affairs of men; and surely if such influence were possible, no motive could be given for its exercise half so powerful as that of saving a soul and reforming a life. The "manifestations"—to borrow a modern cant expression—in which the good man did believe, were altogether fantastic and meaningless: the phenomena he assailed were connected with the greatest of spiritual events. Surely it was the preacher who had the best of the argument.

At Bristol another great step was made towards the organisation of Methodism; but, again, in an

unconscious and almost accidental way. Their first meeting-house came into being, not with any idea of making a church of it, but solely for the convenience of the "bands" which could find no rooms to meet in. For this building money, of course, was required; and while Wesley was considering and consulting with his friends how to raise it, one of the members of the society proposed that every person in it should contribute a penny a-week till the whole was paid. When it was objected that many of them were poor, the proposer of the scheme continued, "Put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well. I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself." This scheme, by which a princely income has since been secured, unfolded further capabilities as it was put into practice. "The persons who had undertaken for a class, as their divisions were called, discovered some irregularities among those for whose contributions they were responsible and reported it to Wesley." With the clear eye of a born administrator he perceived at once the wonderful instrument of power on which he had unwittingly laid his hand; and in a moment, it may be said, the discipline of the community was established. The class-leaders became not only the collectors but the inspectors of the rising community. They were "to see every person in their division at least once a-week, in order to inquire how their souls prospered; to advise, reprove, comfort, and exhort as occasion might require, and

to receive what they were willing to give towards the expenses of the society and the relief of the poor. They were also to meet the minister and the stewards of the society, that they might inform the minister of any that were sick and any that were disorderly." Each leader was, in short, a kind of authorised and solemn Spy with a half-sacred character—commissioned to pry into the souls, the characters, and the actions of the flock in their most private moments. It is a most curious fact that the yoke of such a system as this, perhaps the most frightful kind of inquisition ever established, was voluntarily and joyfully taken up by a mass of persons who, by the very act of entering the society, had made a vow of obedience as complete as ever bound a religious order; and that Wesley, himself a man not endowed with that overflowing human sympathy which attaches all who come within its sphere—a man, on the contrary, not over warm in his affections, imperious in character, full of natural arrogance and severity, should have placed himself at the head of so extraordinary a hierarchy, more absolute than any Pope, is more extraordinary still. Had this rule of Methodism been enforced by any Government, lay or ecclesiastical, it would have roused the whole energy of human nature in a struggle against the intolerable tyranny. Yet thousands of people submitted to it joyfully at the mere will of Wesley and his ecclesiastics! We do not know any more extraordinary fact in the history of religion.

The only change made from this first beginning

was, that the classes soon began to meet weekly in some settled place instead of the visitation from house to house—a considerable relaxation of the system. And such at the present moment continues to be the constitution and government of the Methodist Society.

The community thus brought into being grew, as every created thing must grow, developing principles and details unthought of by its founders; for an institution of any popular kind is like Frankenstein's monster in the story, and pledges its maker to many a mode of provision for its gigantic wants, from which he would have shrunk at the beginning. When he had surmounted his dislike to the first steps, Wesley found that another and another remained to take, all inevitable, and most of them distasteful. Field-preaching, lay-preaching, gradual separation from the Church of which he still prided himself on being a priest and member, came upon him unawares. He found himself committed to one step after another before he perceived what he was doing, and defended himself with curious sophistry as soon as he had yielded to the claims of each separate crisis. "Being ordained as Fellow of a College, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the Word of God in any part of the Church of England," he said to the Bishop of Bristol when requested to leave that prelate's diocese. "Of all men living," he said at a later period, "those clergymen ought not to complain who believe

I preach the Gospel. If they do not ask me to preach in their churches, they are accountable for my preaching in the fields." In the same strain he asked, when circumstances drove him unwillingly into the acceptance of lay-preaching, "What was to be done in a case of so extreme necessity when so many souls were at stake?" He went on thus from step to step, battling nobly with the necessities of his position, and artfully persuading himself of their wisdom as soon as his decision was made and the act beyond recall. Thus the elaborate financial and inquisitorial system of the new community arose out of the fact that a humble barn had to be built to shelter them at their prayers—and the system of itinerary and lay-preaching had both their origin in the sudden extent and multiplication of the members of the Society. Serious intention or purpose there was none in these extraordinary innovations. They were expedients demanded by the necessities of the moment—expedients which, being once established, commended themselves as full of use and adaptation to the great want which existed before they did. The work of Wesley in his age and country was to create that want, and the very strangeness of the means he was obliged to take to supply it, proved how entirely he had fulfilled his mission.

We need not pause, having already exceeded our space, to follow him through his controversy and separation from the Moravians, or breach with Whitfield. The latter disagreement was on the vexed point of

predestination, which Whitfield held strongly, and Wesley from his youth had abhorred. The controversy waxed very hot, and much pain and confusion was wrought, as usual, by that "madness in the brain" which comes upon men when they are wroth with one they love. It is hard to tell who has the better in such a disputation, for it is the luck of such disputations to bring out the worst side of both arguments. We owe to Wesley, however, an epigrammatic definition of his opponent's doctrine, which is worth remembering. By the dogma of election, he says, the elect are saved, do what they will; and the rest of the world damned, do what they can. While thus strong against the favourite doctrines of Calvinism, he was firmly set upon the peculiarities belonging to himself. He demanded of every Christian that he should possess an *assurance* that his soul was saved; and at the same time a belief that the soul, even when thus enlightened, might still fall away and be lost; and he enforced upon his converts the still more extraordinary dogma of perfectibility, requiring them to believe that in their flesh they might become entirely holy, perfect, free from evil deed or thought. Without this, and especially the first, no one could, according to the Reformer, be a Christian at all. His mother at seventy, in some moment of pious exaltation, had, while receiving the communion, been touched by a thrill of higher feeling than usual, and told it to her son, as, no doubt, a revelation from the Holy Spirit, giving the assurance he held so necessary. When

this good woman died, not long after—the mother from whom nearly twenty years before he had received such Christian guidance as few are qualified to give—Wesley was so far warped by his opinions as to put this incident on record on her tombstone as the chief feature in her history, describing her virtuous and pious life as "a legal night of seventy years." Nothing could be more characteristic of the man. His certainty that he himself was and must be right, and that everybody else was naturally prone to error, is as distinct a feature of his mind as is the wonderful clear-sightedness and faculty of seeing what good there was in any practical suggestion which gives to his otherwise narrow personality a certain appearance of candour and frankness.

As for those who differed with him in his own Society, he made sharp work of them. One of these objectors, who held by Whitfield, and had permitted somebody to speak disrespectfully of Wesley at a class-meeting, found himself, to his intense astonishment, solemnly excommunicated ere he knew what was coming. Wesley brooked no rivals, no jar of conflicting claims. He was the universal Court of Appeal, the one man living whose judgment was final. Even in later times, when the Methodists had set up their Conference or Parliament, it was still "Mr Wesley and the Conference,"—as who should say, King, Lords, and Commons. No committee full of talking and circumlocution disturbed the unity and promptitude of his action. He saw a thing was good

and expedient to be done, and did it, without even a pretence of taking constitutional counsel. True, his people interfered with him, drew lots for him, poked themselves bodily into his affairs with a sense that he belonged to them body and soul; but this is the primitive price of popularity, the natural lot of every benevolent despot. He softened much in his insistance upon special points of doctrine towards the end of his life; but he never ceased, within the community he had created, to be Pope and King.

It is scarcely necessary to our purpose to trace the after details of a life which was no life at all in the ordinary sense of the word, but only a mere string of preachings, journeys, meditations, narratives of interesting cases, and awakening meetings. His journals bear a good deal of resemblance to the note-books of a physician: wild records of agitation and excitement subdued, if not by the laying on of his hands, at least by the prayers poured forth over the writhing patient; sometimes broken by gleams of miracle—actual disease healed and devils put to flight; sermons preached in field and churchyard, on his father's tomb by Epworth Church, where he was refused admittance to the communion—everywhere, where men could be got together to listen; fill up the curious, monotonous, wonderful narrative. He rode all over the country—in the course of his life, it is said, "above a hundred thousand miles"—for the most part leaving the reins on his horse's neck, and reading whilst he rode, blocking out the too ready entrance of thought in a way

which it is perhaps good for a man to do when he has found his work in the world, and has no more time left in which to assail and defend his own purpose of being. "In seventy years I never lost one night's sleep," he was able to say at the close of his life. After the troublous morning, with all its delusive storms and lights, a severe, much-occupied existence, full of a great work, and of that power which was the passion of his soul, fell to his share. Outside, trouble surrounded him by times; more than once he was seized upon by a mob, whom he confronted with the cool courage which is always effectual in such an emergency, and which naturally, after a short interval, changed his pursuers into his champions and protectors. He had the care of the Church upon his head, but no personal cares to speak of. He married in middle age, for no particular reason, it would appear. Charles Wesley had married, and Whitfield had married, and the Reformer seems to have thought it was inconsistent with his dignity that he should appear incapable of forming the same tie. His wife was a thorn in his flesh, persecuting him with (of all things in the world) her jealousy of the female correspondents, who are the almost invariable solace of such a man. He had bargained with her that he was not to preach a sermon or travel a mile the less for their union; and probably Mrs Wesley did not see much good of a husband who was always abroad in the world, jogging all over England, and even Scotland, no companion or help to her. The foolish woman

did what she could to make his life a burden to him for twenty years, and then withdrew finally, for no better reason than had dictated her former vagaries. No doubt his placid life was ruffled by this disturbance, but there is no appearance that any profound love existed in him to give a sting to the irritation. He expresses himself well rid of her (though the Latin is not so plump) in his journal; yet confesses to himself that perhaps he had better not have written *that* letter which she had found and read—probably a most pious, harmless epistle.

Thus, and thus only, was the thread fretted, which ran on in a strength most unusual to man to a very advanced age. At seventy-two he declared himself to possess "the same strength as I did thirty years ago," while he attributes this to "my constantly rising at four for about fifty years, my generally preaching at five in the morning—*one of the most healthy exercises in the world*—my never travelling less, by land and sea, than four thousand five hundred miles in a year." At seventy-eight he was still, by the blessing of God, just the same as when twenty-eight. A life full of active exercise, occupation of mind and body, uninterrupted and often extensive, yet unembittered by pricks of care, or those wounds to the heart and affections which waste the energies of men more than work—preserved him thus to extreme old age. He would seem to have had no passions to wear him out: his deepest emotions could be brought before

the brethren to be talked over and settled. His natural heat of temper softened down as soon as he came to have things his own way,—a pleasant manner of subduing that weakness. His intolerance was only shown towards those who troubled him with their differences of opinion. "I have no more right to differ with a man for holding a different opinion from me, than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig," he says; "but if he takes his wig off and begins to shake the powder about my eyes, I shall consider it my duty to get rid of him as soon as possible." This he did summarily, and without hesitation, preserving the peace of the Society by quick execution of heretics. In short, he was not a man of dogmatic genius, or commissioned to impress new opinions on his race. His business was to convince the country it had a soul, and to drive it, with violence if necessary, by any means that man may use, to save that soul alive.

He was trained for this work by the trouble he had about his own, "making" it, as the Irish say, in the first half of his existence, and with natural heat insisting that everybody around him should join in the operation. His own spiritual history is the chart by which he guided the great ship of which he was made pilot. In the early part of his life he insisted that every man should be an ascetic; in the latter, that every man should be converted by conscious movement of Heaven, illumination from the Holy Ghost.

His determination and tenacity prevailed when a lighter purpose would have come to nothing. To have brought together and constituted such a community as that of the Methodists, is almost as great a work, taken in a merely external political point of view, as that of founding a kingdom; and in right royal guise he organised and legislated for his spiritual empire. Not on constitutional principles, or with any weak view of representing the people, but as a royal act of grace, he created the Conference, describing it as composed of "preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care of and in connection with the said John Wesley." At the time of his death, in 1791, 313 preachers and about 77,000 people in England, and at least two-thirds of the number in America, owned his spiritual sway. And yet the founding of this kingdom was not his greatest work. Silent, good men then, as at all times, were sadly moving about the world, keeping their little lamps alight, giving of their oil to none. Wesley threw his, kindled and glowing, into the wide country. He awoke the Church and the race—he made religion a fact too visible to be denied, and changed the spiritual complexion and tenor of his age. How much effect his work may have had in arresting in England that horrible course of national corruption which ended two generations later on the other side of the Channel in the wildest national explosion and conflagration which has ever startled mankind, is an

inquiry into which we have neither time nor call to enter. His figure stands out from the confused background of his time, not in any halo of tenderness or human attraction, not in any overwhelming light of genius, but fixed for ever on the unalterable foundation of a great work. Never has man laboured more hardly, more constantly, with greater devotion or steadiness. With such a pioneer as Whitfield, and such a henchman as his brother Charles, it is still John Wesley who occupies this supreme place—not always wise, often self-willed, immoderate, much-exciting, but yet the Prophet and Reformer of his age.

Had he been in the Church of Rome (and there can be no doubt that there was his fittest sphere), Wesley would have been splendidly utilised, would have taken his place with Dominic and Francis, founder of a vast community. The Church of England, less wise, let the man and his followers slip through her fingers, but, moved by the influence he had thrown abroad into the air, roused herself, as Englishmen use, when the hour was past, to make up as best she could for that inadvertence. Wesley died as he had lived, no schismatic, but a true son of the Church, which was too sleepy even to eject him for his innovations. But her sleep ended with the generation which laughed horse-laughs at the Methodists, and shut their pulpits against their leader. The work of Wesley lived after him, like every great work.

Long as his life was, it was not long enough to see the full effect of his influence. And there can be no doubt that, had he lived to see it, the awakening of the Church of England would have been to him a more joyful event than even the increase of the great Society which for nearly a hundred years has borne his name.

VIII

THE SAILOR

THE SAILOR.

THERE are few things which give so clear an idea of the multiplicity and diversity of life as the glimpses which history affords us of the different occupations carried on at the same moment by men belonging to the same age and educated under the same circumstances. No doubt the contrast continues through all periods, and becomes but greater as civilisation progresses; but yet the circumstances of life in the backwoods or in the bush, wherever our boys may have gone to carry on the conflict with external nature, are so softened by perpetual tidings of them, and by all the aids that science and knowledge can give, that it strikes the imagination less than in those days when the highest sophistications of artificial society at home were going on side by side with the most appalling struggles of primitive man amid the untamed winds and seas. In the eighteenth century science had not penetrated everywhere, inquisitive yet beneficent, with the lamp which is never so

blessed as when it lights up those blank wastes of land and water through which the wanderer of old had to grope his darkling way. And nothing can be more startling and abrupt, for instance, than the contrast between such an impersonation of his period as Horace Walpole and the man whose brief story we are about to tell. About the first we know almost everything that can be known—his "long lean" form stands in the very front of the stage, bepowdered, belaced, bescented, not unkind or unattractive in its way, a thing of velvet and embroidery and fine arts and good taste, with his hands full of pleasant dainty occupations, in which every *dilettante* (and we use the word with no scornful meaning) must feel a certain tenderness of sympathy. Yet to think that while he was writing his letters and collecting his anecdotes about kings and princes and ministers of state, and Patapan, his white dog—while he was unpacking his curiosities and hanging his pictures and building pasteboard Gothic at Strawberry, Anson, for his part, was going round Cape Horn! And that the two men might have shaken hands at some antiquated street-corner, not many months before, and bidden each other a cheerful good-bye, with no particular sense of the difference between them! What a strange chaos would this world seem to any spectator, could we but come to knowledge of such, who had the power to watch its simultaneous scenes at a glance from some starry tower of observation or low-placed bastion of heaven.

Few men have come to such note as he did in his generation of whom there is so little to tell as of Anson, apart from the work which was his hour of revelation. About his origin and the preliminaries of his career we know not much more than we do about those of his ship—where she was built or what became of her, matters of little importance in comparison with what she, and what he, did in their moment of splendid service and action before the world. One small book, the scene of which is laid, not in the haunts of civilised men, but on the high seas and uninhabited islands of the Pacific, contains all our sailor's history, though it embraces only some three or four years of his life. Eleven big volumes are not enough for Horace, out of whose various editions, commentators, and critics, a whole library might be made. But we will not attempt to carry on the comparison. Anson was a sea-captain, evidently known to his superiors as a man worthy of trust, but not otherwise remarkable, when he was chosen to head the squadron which made him famous. He was "of a family at that time new and obscure," says Lord Mahon, "nor had he the advantage of distinguished talents. After his expedition it used to be said of him that he had been round the world but never in it; he was dull and unready on land, slow in business and sparing of speech." A silent unexpansive man, thinking much and saying little, able to keep his own counsel, maturing slowly in his mind plans which no urgent need of sympathy in his nature

tempted him to reveal prematurely: with a silent sense in him—disclosed not by words but by accidental indications of fact—of the beauty and splendour of nature, such as belonged to few men in his time: and with a steady force of resolution and modest undemonstrative valour which no difficulties could appal.

Such is the aspect in which he appears to us dimly to do his work; not him but his work being the notable, ever-memorable thing. It is on the standing-ground of this achievement alone that Anson has any right to a place in the chronicles of his country. But to be, beyond all rivalry—in a nation like England, identified with naval adventure and the supremacy of the seas—the sailor of the age, is no small distinction. During the same period there is no English general whom we can identify as its soldier. Marlborough was over; Wellington was not begun. A crowd of incapable second or third rate commanders were doing what they could—as they have done more or less in all ages—to neutralise the steadfast valour of British soldiers. They gained us a defeat at Fontenoy, glorious, it is true, but no thanks to them; they made the army contemptible in Scotland; they did what they could to reduce its prestige everywhere. But in this unheroic age one man did vindicate for the sister profession its old laurels, and leave a tradition upon which the great seamen of another generation could be formed. He stands between Drake and Nelson, uniting in his sober person something of the

romance of individual adventure impersonated in the former, with something of the legitimate warfare and national importance of the other. On him fell the splendid mantle of the adventurers of Elizabeth's time, though his unobtrusive figure bears little resemblance to theirs. While all the other public officers of England were wasting the public money upon unsuccessful expeditions and untrustworthy allies, Anson alone spoiled the enemy. The Spanish galleon, golden romance of merchandise, once familiar to the British imagination, rose again under his sober touch into a wealthy reality before the country's astonished eyes. The South Seas had but recently shaken the whole fabric of society in this island, and made the very kingdom totter. It was a sordid tragedy when played in Change Alley; but it took to itself a noble human investiture when carried out in a second exciting chapter amid the fairy islands and awful rocks of the Southern Seas.

For, in fact, Anson's expedition was but the *dénouement* and climax of the strange national whirlwind which had rapt England out of its senses, and all but destroyed its credit and mercantile standing in the world twenty years before. The South Sea Company, as has been already described in these sketches, had gained at this terrible price the privilege of sending one ship a-year to the supposed golden coasts of South America. Trade, which then as always was apt to have confused ideas of truth and honour, did what it could to *exploiter* to the best of

its crafty powers this grudging concession ; and as the best means of doing so, sent its one ship, attended by a little fleet of smaller vessels, the office of which was to throw in endless contributions of their own cargo as the freight of the first became exhausted, converting the never-emptying hold of the privileged ship into a kind of inexhaustible Widow's cruse. The Spaniards became suspicious of this trick, as was natural. And when a Spanish ship, bigger and stronger than she, encountered on the high seas the seeming innocence of a little English trader, it is not wonderful, perhaps, that questions should be asked in an unamiable way and with disagreeable results.

Sea-captains, possessed or possessing themselves of an amateur right of search, are not distinguished for a gentle use of it, whatever their nation may be ; and Spanish sea-captains, if tradition speaks truly—tradition which even in very recent times has been awkwardly justified—were exceptionably arrogant and cruel. About half-way between the explosion of the South Sea Company and the setting out of Anson's expedition—the opening and concluding acts of the drama—in the year 1731 a certain skipper, named Jenkins, master of the Rebecca, was met at sea and overhauled by a Spanish *guarda-costa.* As he had nothing contraband on board which could be seized, the unfortunate himself was laid hold upon by the spiteful visitors. They nearly hanged him, frightened him to death, and at last tore off his ear. "Carry that to your king and tell him of it," cried the insolent

tyrants, throwing it at him. Bleeding and furious, the poor man made his way to England, and, "with his owners," hurried out to Hampton Court to lay the facts before the Duke of Newcastle. But Walpole was at the height of his pacific reign, and the Ministry had no desire to be made acquainted with facts which might disturb the peace of the nation. Poor Jenkins carried his ear away with him and exhibited it in the clubs, and had it written about in newspapers. The story became a historical matter, and rankled slowly in the national mind. Eight years after, when the country was tired of peace, and Walpole's opponents were vigorous enough to take the field against him, Jenkins's ear suddenly sprung into sight and worked England up into fury. The events thus fall into each other with a logic rarely to be found in matters of fact. The South Sea Company dishonestly abused the privilege (such as it was) of sending one ship a-year to South America. The Spaniards, seizing the first small stray that came in their way, avenged this big dishonesty on Jenkins, innocent victim, who had nothing to do with the matter. And so it came about that the English nation, feeling one of its Berserkar impulses of battle coming on, blazed up into a sudden explosion of long-smouldering wrath, and declared war with Spain. The first, and, as it happened, last step taken in the matter was the sending forth of two naval expeditions; one with much flourish of trumpets and immense paraphernalia of war under Admiral Vernon, which came to miserable

failure and ruin. The other, small, badly manned, neglected in all its preliminaries, which was to brighten to its pristine glory the naval renown of England, and add, perhaps, the only fresh and genuine laurel produced by the generation, to the national crown.

"The Jenkins-ear question," says Carlyle, in one of those wonderful vivid glances across the mists of history which give his works their greatest charm, "which then looked so mad to everybody, how sane has it now grown! In abstruse ludicrous form there lay immense questions involved in it which were curious enough, certain enough, though invisible to everybody. Half the world lay hidden in embryo under it. Colonial Empire, whose is it to be? Shall half the world be England's for industrial purposes, which is innocent, laudable, conformable to the multiplication-table at least and other plain laws? or shall it be Spain's for arrogant-torpid, sham-devotional purposes, contradictory to every law? The incalculable Yankee nation itself, biggest phenomenon (once thought beautifulest) of these ages, this too, little as careless readers on either side of the sea now know it, lay involved. Shall there be a Yankee nation, shall there not be? Shall the new world be of Spanish type, shall it be of English? Issues which we may call immense."

Of such issues Anson knew and thought nothing. His own conception of his mission is set forth with much straightforward perspicuity and absence of pretence by Mr Walter, his Chaplain, and the compiler of his narrative. "When it was foreseen that a war with Spain was inevitable, it was the opinion of some considerable persons then charged with the administration of affairs that the most prudent step the nation could take on the breaking out of the war was attacking that Crown in her distant settlements, for

by this means it was supposed that we should cut off the principal resources of the enemy, and should reduce them to the necessity of sincerely desiring a peace, as they would thereby be deprived of the returns of that treasure by which alone they could be enabled to carry on a war."

Such was the cause and such the objects, conscious and unconscious, of Anson's expedition. To molest the Spaniard, steal his treasures, disperse his ships, acquire if possible a standing-ground on those golden shores from whence future expeditions might operate, and avenge the national honour which had been outraged. He had other intentions in his private mind besides;—a little science, beneficent sailor-thoughts of tracking out the pathless waters on the other side of the world, and leaving a clear road for those who should come after him — and floating dreams, perhaps, of the golden galleons which might make a man's fortune all in the way of his duty; but duty and obedience to orders first of all—the usual complication of motives which are present in every human enterprise, and link on every individual work by its sides and corners to the general plan of life.

The squadron sailed eight months later than had been intended, according to English use and wont, and in such an imperfect state of preparation as proves the unity of the official mind in all ages and circumstances. It had been intended that the expedition should be strengthened by a considerable body of effective soldiers—"Colonel Bland's regiment, and

three independent companies of one hundred men each." But when the moment of embarkation came, Anson found that this fine promise of land-forces had been transmuted into "five hundred invalids to be collected from the out-pensioners of Chelsea College." No wonder that he was "greatly chagrined at having such a decrepid detachment allotted to him," all the more, no doubt—though of this the historian tells us nothing—that Sir Chaloner Ogle's expedition—"twenty-five big ships of the line, with three half regiments on board ; fireships, bombketches in abundance, and eighty transports, with six thousand drilled marines," going out to Jamaica to Vernon, to perish and come to nothing before Carthagena—was getting ready by his side, and snatching all the good things in the way of men from his very mouth. His vehement remonstrances, even though backed by those of Sir Charles Wager, a lord of the Admiralty, had no effect. The pensioners were "the properest men that could be employed," was the judgment of certain "persons who were supposed to be better judges of soldiers" than either of the Admirals, writes the Chaplain, with suppressed indignation. The invalids themselves, however, were of Anson's mind. "All those who had limbs and strength to walk out of Portsmouth deserted, leaving behind them only such as were literally invalids, most of them being sixty years of age, and some of them upwards of seventy." Two hundred and fifty-nine of these unhappy victims of officialism came sadly

on board the ship, Anson and his sailors no doubt standing by with disgust and pity. "It is difficult," says the sympathetic Chaplain, "to conceive a more moving scene than the embarkation of these unhappy veterans; they were themselves extremely averse to the service they were engaged in, and fully apprised of all the dangers they were afterwards exposed to; the apprehensions of which were strongly marked by the concern that appeared in their countenances, which was mixed with no small degree of indignation to be thus hurried from their repose into a fatiguing employ to which neither the strength of their bodies nor the vigour of their minds were any ways proportioned, and where, without seeing the face of an enemy, or in the least promoting the success of the enterprise, they would in all probability uselessly perish by lingering and painful diseases; and this too after they had spent the activity and strength of their youth in their country's service."

Nor was this all: his complement of sailors was deficient by three hundred men, who were to be supplied to him at Portsmouth; but in place of these all he could muster, after a weary waiting of five or six months, was a hundred and seventy seamen, made up by some odd marines and other accidental auxiliaries. Thus retarded and thwarted at every point, he managed to sail at last, in September 1740 (his instructions being dated January 31). His squadron consisted of his own ship, the Centurion, of sixty guns; the Gloucester, of fifty; the Severn, of fifty;

the Pearl, of forty (these two were soon lost, and returned inglorious home); the Wager (which has a separate story of its own), of twenty-eight, and the little Trial sloop, of eight guns. This little cluster of vessels, with their imperfect crews and hollow-cheeked invalids, left Portsmouth, no doubt, with a glare of not ungenerous envy and high indignant mettle, at the "twenty-five big ships of the line," which were getting ready to go to their work the easy way, with every appliance for success, while this little devoted expedition went out to make a path for itself across the wildest waters known to man, at a bad season, and with everything against it. Not a word says the mild historian of any such contrast; had his record been the only one, we should never have known what a wealthy splendid squadron was preparing side by side with the Centurion and the Gloucester. Yet the reader may be permitted to imagine in such a case some sharper thrill of resolution, as he cast a last glance on the busy dockyards, darting through the Commodore's mind. To come home no worse, were least said, than these same brave gentlemen! let storm or foe do their worst to bring back to England some token of what a man can dare when least supported by fortune and the great! He is silent, and lets fall never a word to tell us what was in his thoughts. But still it would be no wonder if that high stimulant of indignation, which is so often mixed in the cup of England's public servants, should have tingled through Anson's

veins as he "tided" silently down the Channel, the wind already in his face, and his troubles begun. Had he known what the difference of the coming home would be, it might not, perhaps, have been so well for the discipline of his mind. But at this moment, at least, Vernon, a popular hero, had it all his own way.

And the very winds conspired with the Admiralty and its officials against the brave little squadron. Having been detained so long at home, their only hope of tolerable weather in rounding Cape Horn was that they should be able to make up for lost time by speed at sea. On the contrary, they were forty days in reaching Madeira, a distance sometimes accomplished in ten or twelve, says the Chaplain, who pauses in his simple vivid story to describe that island and its excellent wines, "which seem to be designed by Providence for the refreshment of the inhabitants of the torrid zone," he says, with enthusiasm. Here they were slightly excited by a report of some strange squadron which had been seen at sea, and which was the Spanish fleet looking for them, full information having come of all their intentions. This fleet, however, never met the expedition of which it was in search. It drifted off into the great sea, into the storms, and came to destruction peaceably without any aid from Anson's guns. "The Spanish sailors, being for the most part accustomed to a fair-weather country, might be expected to be very averse to so dangerous and fatiguing a

navigation," our Chaplain says, with insular complacency. His conviction, however, that the opposition between England and Spain is no thing of the moment, but an everlasting national feud, comes out in the simplest amusing way, though the fact was not the least amusing to him. It never seems to occur to him that an English ship is likely to visit these coasts with other than hostile intentions. And there is a certain Portuguese governor, Don José Sylva de Paz, of whom he writes as a *Times* correspondent might write of an ill innkeeper, warning the British tourist against his house. This man not only ruled a port which geographers had declared to be healthy and convenient, but which the squadron found neither the one nor the other—a very sufficient ground of irritation—but secretly sent word to the Spaniard of the whereabouts of the English fleet. "The same perfidy every British cruiser may expect who touches at St Catherine's, while it is under the government of Don José Sylva de Paz," cries our Chaplain, with a vehemence which has something strangely humorous and pathetic in it, as his voice comes hushed across the dead century. How little the risk of being betrayed to the Spaniard would alarm any British cruiser nowadays! Indeed, at this special juncture of affairs, every reference to the yet unfallen, yet powerful, sea-going empire, with its colonies and fabulous galleons, strikes one as the most curious sarcasm. Spain and England rivals for the dominion of half a world! By what wonderful magic

of evil can that old noble heroic country have come to be the insignificance it is?

This port of St Catherine's on the coast of Brazil was the second station at which the squadron paused, and already its wants and imperfections were apparent. Sickness had appeared in the crowded ships. The Centurion alone sent eighty patients from its thronged and airless forecastle to the big hospital-tent established on shore,—patients rather increased than diminished in number by the moist heat of the climate and other local disadvantages. Then some deficiency was found in one of the ships, the little Trial, one of the stanchest of the squadron, which had sprung her masts and otherwise disabled herself. While the sick men were carried on shore to gain what equivocal advantage they could among the mosquitoes on the marshy coast, and a busy scene of industry arose in all the ships—the carpenter's hammer and the sailmaker's needle going from morning to night—the Commodore in painful impatience overlooked these necessary but ill-timed labours, counting the days till he could set sail. It was "near a month" before the Trial was ready—a month every day of which was paid for by the lives of the men, since every day delayed the passage of Cape Horn, the point to which all looked forward with alarm but too well founded. They should have been rounding that dangerous headland when they were leaving St Catherine's, so far behind were they. And with hearts full of anxiety, and such fear as

brave men need not blush to acknowledge, they set out at length, on the 18th of January, from the but half-friendly port. Twenty-eight graves at St Catherine's had been filled from the Centurion's crew alone, and yet ninety-six sick were mournfully re-embarked to take their chance upon the bitter seas. The Commodore, however, was fully aware of the dangers he was about to encounter, and prepared for them with characteristic prudence. In case of misadventure happening to one, each ship had its distinct instructions. There was a trysting-place at St Julian; another at the island of our Lady of Succour — much-needed patroness; another at Juan Fernandez, an isle which romance had already made her own. In the land-locked waters at St Catherine's the little council of commanders calmly looked the facts in the face and braced themselves to their work. Then they went forward with their lives in their hands.

The story sounds more like that of a blind man groping his precarious way through a district full of snares and pitfalls, than of a daring British squadron traversing the subject seas. They went on sounding at every step; casting the lead, sometimes into measureless depths of ocean, sometimes in sixty, eighty, forty fathoms, the bottom varying as the depth did. All along the coast of Patagonia they proceeded in this cautious way, looking out with ever-growing anxiety for the worst, which was not yet reached. This caution was but half, if even so much as half, for themselves; they were groping for the good of

England; making such sketches as their skill permitted, rectifying their charts, lighting up the seas with divine lights of safety for those who might follow. At St Julian, close to the scene of sternest danger, the Trial is again in trouble with those unlucky masts, which are too lofty for the latitude, and have to be cut and hacked and mended, while the Commodore painfully restrains his impatience, and the Chaplain has leisure to find out about the wild horses and wild cattle, and the wonders of the lasso, there first displayed to curious eyes. And then once more the fated squadron is under way. Going softly *à tâtons*, feeling its way, ship by ship steals forward with a certain solemnity to that awful strait of Le Maire, which was to carry them into the scene of their mission. Between the bristling coast of Tierra del Fuego and the wild rocks of Staten Land lay this horrible ghostly passage. In those days men had not learned to love nature in her grand and gloomy aspects; and perhaps it would be hard at any time to expect from the sailor any enthusiasm of admiration for two awful lines of deadly cliff, and the gloomy channel between them. Tierra del Fuego, the Chaplain tells us, was "of a stupendous height, covered everywhere with snow;" and, on the other hand, "Staten Land far surpasses it in the wildness and horror of its appearance; seeming to be entirely composed of inaccessible rocks, without the least mixture of earth or mould between them. These rocks terminate in a vast number of ragged points which spire up to a

prodigious height, and are all of them covered with everlasting snow. The points themselves are on every side surrounded with frightful precipices, and often overhang in a most astonishing manner; and the hills which bear them are generally separated from each other by narrow clefts, which appear as if the country had been frequently rent by earthquakes; for these chasms are nearly perpendicular, and extend through the substance of the main rocks almost to their very bottoms; so that nothing could be imagined more savage and gloomy than the whole aspect of this coast."

Had this description been written to-day, no doubt the voyager would have found a certain enthusiasm for this grand by-way through the seas. He would have discovered lights about it, and reflections unseen by the anxious practical eye of the eighteenth century. But we doubt whether Art itself could have made a more effective point than the contrast of this sullen awful passage through which the silent ships sped breathless, the little Trial leading the way—with the supposed brightness beyond, to which the mariners looked forward, seeing through those gloomy portals of rock only a silvery Pacific Ocean and the end of their enterprise. They held their breath, half, perhaps, from the shadow of death overhanging them in the pinnacles of those horrible rocks, but at least as much from expectation, feeling at last—were but this passage made—the grand difficulty surmounted, and their work within reach of their hand. "We

presumed we had nothing before us from hence but an open sea," cries the Chaplain, bursting forth out of the cliff-shadows into a short-lived outbreak of the prevailing hope, "till we arrived on those opulent coasts where all our hopes and wishes centred. We could not help persuading ourselves that the greatest difficulty of our voyage was now at an end, and that our most sanguine dreams were on the point of being realised; and hence we indulged our imaginations in those romantic schemes which the fancied possession of the Chilian gold and Peruvian silver might be conceived to inspire." The morning was lovely, bright, and mild—the finest day they had seen since they left England,—the sun, no doubt, blazing upon the snow—though that is not a point which the Chaplain thinks worth mentioning. There was a brisk breeze, which hurried them through the dreaded passage in about two hours, though it was between seven and eight leagues in length. And the hearts of the anxious Commodore and his men rose within them. Surely here was fortune smiling upon them at last.

Alas! it was only now they were upon the dreaded Cape, their terror throughout their voyage. Instead of proving, as they hoped, a gateway into the soft Pacific, the wild channel was but the avenue to destruction. "The day of our passage was the last cheerful day that the greatest part of us would ever live to enjoy," says the Chaplain, mournfully; and it is here that the tragic interest of his narrative begins. Before they were well out of the shadow of the rocks,

the terrible truth burst upon them. The blue sky darkened over, the wind changed, the tide turned—"furiously," says the historian. A violent current (he can use no milder words), aided by the "fierceness and constancy of the westerly winds," drove them to eastward. For forty days, almost without intermission, they were driven and tossed, playthings of the waters, up and down in miserable zigzags, about the awful Cape; now menaced by "mountainous waves," any one of which, had it broken fairly over them, would have sent them to the bottom; now dashed almost to pieces by the rolling of the ship—their sails torn off by the winds, split by the frost—their rigging covered with ice, their bodies benumbed and disabled by the cold. Sometimes a fog came on; and the Commodore, himself struggling for bare life, fired forlorn guns every half-hour,—flashes of despair to keep the perishing ships together. Yet all this time, in the height of their misery, there still lingered a cheerful assurance of hope. According to all they knew, they had been making their way steadily towards the Pacific. It could not but be near at hand, and their toils near a close. And with every day of storm the longing for that sea of peace, for those isles and "opulent coasts," must have grown on the weary crews, who, any hour, any moment—so they thought—might suddenly glide into the rippling waters and sunny calm. It may be supposed, accordingly, what was the consternation of the sailors, thus strained to the supreme struggle, when they found

that they had been betrayed by an insidious current completely out of their course, and saw once more the awful rocks of Tierra del Fuego frowning out of the mists upon their lee.

Before this time scurvy, most dreaded of all the dangers of a long sea-voyage, had made its fatal appearance among them. With their feeble old pensioners and rapidly-made-up crews, sickness had been rife in the ships from the very beginning of the voyage; and it is evident that Anson's good sense and good feeling had forestalled sanitary science so far as to do all that was possible for the ventilation and cleanliness of his crowded vessel. So early as November the sickly condition of the crews and the want of air between the decks had been reported to him; and by the time they arrived at St Catherine's it was found necessary to give the Centurion a "thorough cleansing, smoking it between the decks, and after all, washing every part well with vinegar," —a precaution made needful by the "noisome stench" and vermin, which had become "intolerably offensive." This being so when things went comparatively well, it may be imagined what these decks must have got to be when every comfort and almost every hope had abandoned the unhappy mass of suffering men, drenched with salt water, frozen with cold, worn with continual labour, who flung themselves upon them to die. During their terrible beatings about Cape Horn, the scurvy took stronger and stronger hold upon them. In April they lost forty-three men from it on

board the Centurion alone; in May double that number; in June, before they reached Juan Fernandez, "the disease extended itself so prodigiously that, after the loss of about two hundred men, we could not at last muster more than six foremast men in a watch capable of duty." The officers themselves (and, still more remarkably, the officers' servants) seem to have escaped the attacks of this disease, fortified either by the tremendous burden of responsibility, or by that curious force of high spirit and finer mettle which carries so many absolutely weaker men through the perils which slay the strongest. Our Chaplain records the characteristics of the disease with that grave and calm simplicity which distinguishes his style, revealing its full horrors, yet never dwelling unduly on them. Some of its victims, he describes, lay in their hammocks eating and drinking, in cheerful spirits, and with vigorous voices; yet in a moment, if but moved from one place to another, still in their hammocks, died out of hand, all vital energy being gone from them. Some who thought themselves still able for an attempt at duty would fall down and die among their comrades on attempting a stronger pull or more vigorous strain than usual. Every day, while winds and waves, roaring and threatening round, held over the whole shipload another kind of death, must the dim-eyed mariners with failing strength and sinking spirit have gathered to the funeral of their dead. By this time their companion ships had all disappeared, and the Centurion alone,

with its sick and dying, tossed about almost at the will of the waves upon that desolate sea. At last there came a moment when, destruction being imminent, "the master and myself," our brave Chaplain, undertook the management of the helm, while every available soul on board set to work to repair and set the sails and secure the masts, to take advantage once more in desperation of a favourable change of wind. This was their last storm; but not even then were the troubles of this terrible voyage at an end. They missed Juan Fernandez by one of those mistakes which come in with bewildering certainty at such moments of desperation to enhance all sufferings. "The Commodore himself was strongly persuaded that he saw it," but, overpowered by the scepticism of his officers, changed his course in over-precaution. Then at last the high hearts of the expedition gave way. The water was failing, to add to all the rest; men were dying five and six every day. "A general dejection prevailed among us," says the historian. It was at this moment, when hope and heart were wellnigh gone, that the island of their hopes, all smiling in the sullen seas, with soft woods and grassy slopes and sweet streams of running water, suddenly burst like a glimpse of paradise upon their hungering eyes.

Nothing can be more touching than the sober, simple story, as it describes this deliverance out of despair. The feeble creatures, to whom water had become the first of luxuries, hastened on deck as fast

as their tottering limbs would carry them, to gaze with eyes athirst at a great cascade of living water flinging itself, with the wantonness of nature, over a rock a hundred feet high into the sea. The first boat sent on shore brought back heaps of *grass*, having no time to search for better vegetables. The spectre crew were four hours at work, with the assistance of all the ghosts from below who could keep their feeble legs, to raise the cable, when it was necessary to change their anchorage, and could not manage it with all their united strength. But yet the haven was reached, the tempest over for the moment. The ship had but settled to her moorings when a tiny sail bore bravely up upon the newly arrived, and proved to be the Trial, valorous little sloop, which had held its own against all the dangers encountered by the Centurion, and now found its way to the trysting-place, with only its captain, lieutenant, and three men able to stand by the sails. A fortnight later, some of the sailors, gazing out from a height upon the sea, saw, or fancied they saw, another sail faintly beating about the horizon. In five days more it appeared again, making feeble futile attempts to enter the safe shelter in which Anson lay. The watchful Commodore sent out instant help, risking his boats and refreshed convalescent men to save his consort, and by this timely help kept them alive, until, after three weeks or more of fruitless attempts, the Gloucester at last got into the bay, having lost three-fourths of her crew. Three weather-beaten

hulks, with torn sails and broken masts; three groups of worn-out men escaped, as from the dead, looked each other in the face in this lull of fate. With the whisper of the soft woods in their ears, and delicious noise and tinkle of running water, instead of the roaring of the winds and the sea, what salutations, from the edge of the grave, must have been theirs! The brave Commodore set to work, without the loss of an hour, to remove the sick to shore: not a man among them laboured harder than he, the leader, and his officers followed his example, willingly or unwillingly. From one vessel after another the helpless and suffering were landed, to be healed and soothed out of their miseries. Green things of better quality than grass, and fresh fish, and flesh of goats, and new-made bread, consoled the worn-out wretches, and rest stole into the souls of the almost lost. Anson for his own part, with a touch of sentiment which speaks out of the utter silence in which he is content to leave himself, with a power beyond that of words, chose for himself an idyllic resting-place in this moment of repose.

"I despair of conveying an adequate idea of its beauty," says our Chaplain,—who, let us hope, shared it with his master. "The piece of ground that he chose was a small lawn that lay on a little ascent, at the distance of about half a mile from the sea. In the front of his tent there was a large avenue cut through the woods to the seaside, which, sloping to the water with a gentle descent, opened a prospect of the bay and the ships at anchor. This lawn was screened behind by a tall wood of myrtle, sweeping round it in the form of a theatre. . . . There were, besides, two streams of crystal water which

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ran on the right and left of the tent, within one hundred yards' distance, and were shaded by the trees which skirted the lawn on either side."

He thinks some faint idea of "the elegance of this situation" may be gleaned from a print which, unfortunately, is not to be found in the edition before us. A certain suppressed poetry of mind must have been in the man who, after such desperate encounter with primitive dangers, pitched his lonely tent between those running rills, with the bay and his ships at anchor softly framed at his feet by the sweet myrtle boughs. Does not the reader hear the sudden hush in the stormy strain,—

> "A sound as of a hidden brook,
> In the leafy month of June."

With what a profound harmony does this momentary vision of repose and tender quiet fall into the tale, all ajar with the danger of warring winds and waves!

While Anson was drawing this breath of tranquillity and health, and taking up again, undismayed, the thread of his plans against the enemy, the other admiral, Vernon, with his splendid fleet and armament, had collapsed all into nothing. Long before, indeed, in April, while dauntless Anson, without a thought of turning back in his mind, was going through his agony round Cape Horn, the struggle was over for that rival who had outshone, outnumbered, and swallowed up his poor little expedition. The big fleet which sailed amid the cheers of Eng-

land had beat back, all broken, disgraced, and discomfited, to Jamaica—driven miserably away from before the face of that old Spanish foreshadowing of a grim Sebastopol, known as Carthagena—ere our little squadron painfully got itself together in the bay at Juan Fernandez. Our Commodore, of course, could know nothing of that disaster, and indeed was still pondering in his mind how even yet, even now, his ragged shipwrecked band might carry something home to balance the conquests of those rustling gallants. Never could a greater contrast have been; and it was well for England that the chief seaman of so critical an age was not poor popular Vernon recriminating with his General at Jamaica, but Anson, musing alone on the island lawn, just out of the jaws of death, planning a thousand daring adventures, with his eyes fixed on the deceitful quiet of that Southern Sea.

And to carry out the other part of his character, it is evident that the Chaplain-secretary—who must by this time have grown to be a stout sailor, with clear eyes of his own and a modest courageous soul—got little rest even in this interval of repose. He has scarce drawn breath from his tragic narrative, and still labours at his breast with a suppressed passion, when he is about again, setting down his master's distinct seamanlike instructions, topographical account of the island, and guide to mariners. As Anson groped along the unknown coast, coming up to the climax of tempest which drove soundings out

of the level of possibility, so now he surveys the rocks and inlets about his island, indicating where the British cruiser may and may not attempt to anchor, and settling once for all in sound numbers where that isle of Safety is to be found. A mistake in respect to this had cost him seventy men—but never English sea-captain should pay so dearly again for the knowledge, if the Commodore and the Chaplain could prevent it. Thus the two set to work for their country as soon as they had got their sick on shore, and were at liberty for a stroke of independent toil. How they found a goat with its ears slit, one of Alexander Selkirk's flock, our Chaplain tells us by the way; and Crusoe with his umbrella seems to come out of the woods as he speaks, and give a friendly nod to the narrator. For it is not the first time we have seen Juan Fernandez, or found it a shelter from the tempest. The reader pauses over the halcyon moment, almost longing to believe that it is a community of Crusoes that have now got possession of the isle, and that there, on the soft lawn between the brooks, the seaman will stay and forget his toils. Vain fancy! there where he sits, intent upon the distant bay and the ships at anchor, it is how to get at his work again, how to resume those toils, how to plunge once more into conflict with seas and Spaniards, rich galleons and prying *guarda-costas*—that is all the burden of his thoughts.

The reckoning which remained to be made, however, when the sufferers came to life again, and the

ghastly death-angel departed from hovering over the ships, was enough to discourage the stoutest heart. Two hundred and ninety-two men had died out of the Centurion alone since the commencement of the voyage; the Gloucester, though a smaller ship, had lost an equal number; the Trial, about half of her crew. Out of fifty pensioners and seventy-nine marines on board the Centurion, only four of the one and eleven of the other survived. Every pensioner on board the Gloucester had perished; and of forty-eight marines only two remained. Thus the forebodings of the Commodore, and of the helpless veterans themselves, and of reason, if the authorities had cared anything about reason, were fully carried out. The three ships had started from England with nine hundred and sixty-one men on board—all that they could now muster among them was three hundred and thirty-five; "a number greatly insufficient for manning the Centurion alone," says the Chaplain, with dejection, "and barely capable of navigating all the three with the utmost exertion of their strength and vigour." A chill of bitter discouragement evidently overwhelmed the steadfast heart of the Commodore as he numbered his remnant. A Spanish squadron was out in search of him, he knew; and, "however contemptible the ships and sailors of this part of the world may have been generally esteemed," says the historian, with a quaint mixture of national arrogance and self-pity, "it was scarcely possible for anything bearing the name of a ship of force, to be

feebler and less considerable than ourselves." This was one very gloomy side of the question; but, on the other hand, there was the galling thought of the Spanish crow of triumph which should ring through all the seas should the English allow themselves to be driven home without striking a blow. "This was a subject on which we had reason to imagine the Spanish ostentation would remarkably exert itself," our Chaplain adds, stung by the thought; and yet, what was to be done under the frightful complication of circumstances? To make a snatch at "what few prizes we could pick up at sea," and get to Panama, where it would be better to be beholden to Vernon, no doubt triumphant by this time, for reinforcements, than to fail,—this would seem to have been the plan which formed itself in the Commodore's mind as he counted his men;—not altogether a cheerful conclusion, and yet the only practicable thing to do.

The first part of this programme, at least, was carried out at once. It was the middle of June when Anson arrived at his island in the condition we have described. On the 8th of September, the Centurion having just got herself cleaned and mended, a sail appeared on the horizon, which, after some doubt, the keen nautical eyes watching from their point of observation decided to be a Spaniard. "We immediately got all our hands on board, set up our rigging, bent our sails," and by five in the afternoon got out, notwithstanding want of wind, to sea; resolute, in the very fury of dejection, not to let an opportunity slip.

The opportunity turned out to be a Spanish merchantman, laden with a miscellaneous cargo, which yielded with trembling and dismay, being totally unarmed and helpless, at the first summons. Besides her sugar and cotton,—peaceful commodities, which were not important to our sailors,—they found what they liked better—"seven trunks of wrought plate, and twenty-three serons of dollars, each weighing upwards of two hundred pounds avoirdupois." No contemptible prize. The Spaniards, with their heads full of the awful tradition of the Buccaneers, awaited with horror the will of their captors; and when our noble first-lieutenant went on board of them, with his face tarnished by a hundred storms, and the *fine fleur* of courtesy which no storm can tarnish, the terrified crowd could but gasp and gaze upon this nautical angel, not able to believe that such beautiful politeness, such mercy and goodwill, could be true. The letters found in the prize put an end, however, to any hope Anson might have formed of help from his brother admiral—a hope which had already blossomed out into various great projects, such as that of capturing Panama, "which would have given to the British nation the possession of the isthmus, whereby we should have been in effect masters of all the treasures of Peru." The astounding news that Vernon's expedition had failed, no doubt acted two ways upon the valiant Commodore. It left him beyond hope of any help, and at the same time it left him entirely free to follow his own instincts, stung by the

double necessity of silencing the Spaniard. It was fortunate that with such news came the wonderful stimulus of the prize to give everybody courage. They ascertained, at the same time, the destruction of the squadron sent out to look for them, and that they were comparatively safe in the retreat of which they had taken possession. With this consolation, towing the big captive ship and her doubloons, the Centurion went back to her expectant comrades in the bay to revive their hearts. "And now the spirits of our people being greatly raised, and their despondency dissipated by this earnest of success, they forgot all their past distresses, resumed their wonted alacrity, and laboured indefatigably in completing our water, receiving our lumber, and in preparing to take our farewell of the island." The Gloucester was sent out "to cruise off the highland of Paita," and keep watch lest another Spanish expedition might be despatched from Callao to hunt the English. The Trial had already gone off "the very next morning" after the Commodore's arrival, to look out for further prizes; and on the 19th of September, about three months after her forlorn entrance into that island bay, the Centurion spread out her cloudy wings once more, and plunged forth, a wild yet lawful reiver—big, splendid, magnanimous bird of prey—into these wealthy seas.

For some time after the story is but a record of prizes; eager seamen's eyes intent on the horizon for a sail; flash and swoop of the great half-manned ship

upon the trembling Spaniard; anxious investigation after doubloons; unexpected, incredible mercy and kindness to the captives. Soon the Trial had her spell of conquest too—"one of the largest merchantmen employed in those seas," though unhappily with but £5000 of silver on board. This seems, however, to have cost the brave little ship her own life, which the reader grieves to learn as if she had been a living creature. Dismasted, leaking, crazy, parting at every timber, the little conqueror of the seas had to be committed to them like so many of her crew, her men watching by her in the prize they had just secured, no doubt with heavy hearts and a certain half religious solemnity, till the dead ship went down in the ocean she had breasted so long. But the Commodore had no time to dally by the grave of either man or sloop. The next prize had but £170 of money in her, which was a disappointment; and her goods, though valuable, were useless to her captors; though, indeed, our Chaplain piously reflects,—"though we could make no profit thereby ourselves, it was some satisfaction to us to consider that it was so much really lost to the enemy, and that the despoiling them was no contemptible branch of that service in which we were now employed by our country."

Soon, however, a larger enterprise dawned upon the little fleet, for fleet it gradually became as prize after prize was added to the Commodore's train. Lieutenant Brett, sent on with the ship's barge and pinnace to seize a flying sail, brought news of treasure

at the little town of Paita close by, where some escaped vessel had carried information that the English were at hand, and set the whole coast a-tremble. The governor was about to remove the treasure, and there was no time to be lost. In every point of view the opportunity was tempting; the place was poorly defended and near at hand; the sailors were eager for conquest; a swift-sailing vessel, which the heavy old Centurion could never hope to cope with afoot, was about to leave the harbour with specie, and must be caught, if at all, in port. And, to crown all, there was here an opportunity of getting rid of the prisoners, an inconvenient and unsafe cargo, numbering half as many as their captors. Among them were three women — a mother, with two beautiful daughters— whom Anson treated with the most chivalrous respect, to the utter amazement of their fellow-captives,—but whom, no doubt, he was very glad to get rid of at the earliest opportunity. That very night, the Commodore being little fond of delay, the expedition bore down upon Paita; and Lieutenant Brett, once more in his boats, set out by ten o'clock in the darkness to the work of conquest. The boats' crews steered into the harbour of the sleeping town with all that air of frolic which English man-of-war's-men carry into the most desperate encounters. "The shouts and clamour of threescore sailors who had been confined so long on shipboard, and were now for the first time on shore in an enemy's country, joyous as they always are when they land, and animated besides, in the present

case, with the hopes of an immense pillage; the huzzas, I say," cries our Chaplain, himself a little excited, "of this spirited detachment, joined with the noise of their drums, and favoured by the night, had augmented their number in the opinion of the enemy to at least three hundred." The whole affair passed over almost as bloodlessly as any other frolic. The terrified inhabitants fled in their nightgear, leaving everything behind them. And thereupon arose such a scene of grotesque good-natured schoolboy riot as perhaps a conquered town never witnessed before. While the serious work of removing the treasure was going on, every man in his disengaged moments foraged for himself. They found the laced coats and hats of the townsfolk in their deserted houses, and with the wild humour of their class immediately seized upon this opportunity of sport. In the confusion of the night—there being, thank heaven, no worse outrage, it would seem, to turn the farce into a tragedy —the rough fellows fluttered about under the torchlight in the spoil they had won, putting on "the glittering habits" over their own dirty trousers and jackets, "not forgetting, at the same time, the tye or bag wig and laced hat, which were generally found with the clothes." Some, "not finding men's clothes sufficient to equip themselves," the Chaplain thinks—or, more probably, to enhance the effect of the boisterous masquerade—put on women's gowns and petticoats, "provided there was finery enough." One can imagine the strange scene, the grotesque forms, the

horse-laughter and shouts of rough merriment, making night hideous. But yet, so far as appears, there is no blacker story to tell; and a conqueror who only plays such pranks before unoffended heaven is no terrible sight.

The Spaniards generally, according to the account given by our Chaplain, had fallen into a mild craze of wonder over the innocence of their daring invaders. Lieutenant Brett did not know his own people as they danced about fantastic under his wondering eyes, but all the time kept a steady watch over them, and saw to the swift and sure collection of the treasure. Next morning the English flag made itself visible on the flagstaff of the fort, and the Centurion anchored in the bay, receiving boat-loads of silver, wealth to the full extent of their hopes. By this time the fugitives from the town, under their fugitive governor, had begun to assemble on a hill behind, with much demonstration of force. They had mustered a body of two hundred horse, fully equipped, and of imposing appearance, who consoled themselves by parading on the heights, and lending the strains of their band to amuse the threescore begrimed and disguised seamen labouring at their work of destruction below, but made no attempt to recover the town, or stop the transport of goods which was going on under their very eyes. The concluding act in this wild extravaganza had a tragical air enough. Having secured their prisoners in a church, safe and out of the way, the boarding-party made a conflagration of Paita and

all her stores—a proceeding which, as Lord Mahon says, "can scarcely be defended in civilised war," and has "imprinted a deep blot on the glory of Lord Anson's expedition." A Spanish historian goes so far as to declare that it was done without Anson's knowledge, and *lui avait fort déplu*. The courtesies of war, however, are a matter above all others ruled by the character of the age in which that war is made; and Anson's historian has already given his opinion on the subject—which, no doubt, was that of his Commander—in a passage we have quoted. It is perfectly clear that it never occurred to them to consider the property of private individuals. A bigger or smaller impersonation of Spain was all the Commodore and his squadron saw in Paita, or in the innocent merchant-ships they took. To molest Spain was their special mission; and to know that the goods thus destroyed was so much lost to the enemy, was, no doubt, once more a pious satisfaction to the authorities of the expedition, both secular and ecclesiastical. The Chaplain neither regrets nor justifies the firing of the town; to him it is clearly a matter of course. He is proud to record the wonder of the Spaniards over Anson's unparalleled clemency to themselves; and, in a lesser degree, it gives him sensible pleasure to tell us that but one man of the invaders forgot himself so far as to take "too large a dose of brandy" during the bloodless sack of the place. But the vast bonfire which destroyed so many houses and fortunes does not touch him at

all. It is so much loss to the enemy. He has no other thought.

When the Commodore received his victorious detachment back again with their spoils, leaving the unhappy townsfolk free to return to the ashes of their dwellings, he was not without his own troubles. Quarrels arose on the question of the booty, the men who had remained on board and missed the fun feeling it hard naturally to miss the profit as well. This disturbance was quieted by an order from Anson that all private plunder was to be produced and divided, which was done accordingly; and a curious Rag-fair the decks of the old ship must have presented as every man's hoard was displayed. When the division had been made, the magnanimous Commodore presented the actual victors with his own share, congratulating them on their achievement; and so peace was secured.

The Gloucester, which all this time had been cruising on her station, making such prizes as she could find for her own hand, without any share in the glory and amusement of this exploit, was encountered shortly after, having laid hold of two inconsiderable vessels only, though one of them had £7000 on board. The other was a barge laden with cotton in "jars"—a curious kind of package—the crew of which professed to be of the poorest, yet were found, to the bewilderment of their captors, eating pigeon-pie out of silver dishes. When, however, the pretended cotton was looked into—a matter which must have been settled at once, one would think, the first time

a jar was lifted—it was discovered that the cotton was but a covering to a silvery mass of doubloons, twelve thousand pounds' worth of them—which must have gone far to reconcile the Gloucester to her absence from Paita. Thus the English adventurers accomplished their mission merrily, wind and tide and fair weather in their favour, and everything granted to them for which the British sailor most sighed—plenty of prize-money, plenty of work, a little fighting, and a little danger to sweeten their well-being, and the consciousness of having retrieved their fortune by their own endurance, patience, and valour. Success, instead of satisfying, did but stimulate the Commodore. No doubt, with the prick of his comrades' defeat at Carthagena so fresh in his mind, the destruction of Paita was sweet to him, an event over which no Spaniard could glorify himself; and after such a feat, the squadron could no longer content itself with dabbling in little prizes and jars of hidden treasure. The galleon which had flitted across their dreams since ever they left England was now near enough and sure enough to quicken the beating of many a heart. It was no longer a mere vision of romance—a Cleopatra's galley with Wealth sitting enthroned on her gorgeous deck—but an ascertained certainty, an apple of gold just ready to drop into the eager mouth. Blessed Indians, creatures undeniably genuine, had actually seen, and been on board of the glorious vision, and could answer for its reality. Once a-year, from Manilla to Acapulco, this ship

of fortune made her way, and there was nothing in the world to prevent the English sailor from standing in across her bows and securing to himself her golden delights. On this, accordingly, the Commodore fixed his eye. As soon as the little squadron had come together again, and settled into working trim by destroying a few prizes, and generally shaking itself down, Anson directed his course towards the north, steering for the port of Acapulco, where he hoped to arrive in time to intercept this prize of prizes. By this time the expedition numbered five sail, after the destruction of the least satisfactory vessels. Thus they set out again on the scarce-known way, sheathing the cutlass for the moment, and taking to the lead and the pencil. Lieutenant Brett—he of the boats, the conqueror of Paita—seems to have been the artist of the expedition, as Mr Walter was its historian. It is tantalising not to be able to refer to his plates of every headland and bay and island that struck the Commodore's eye. Full of hopes about the galleon, and speculations as to her whereabouts, the ships bowled clumsily along the wealthy shores of Peru, across the great gulf of Panama, doing their duty by their country in a more peaceable way than by the burning of Spanish towns and ships—sounding, noting, making sure of everything—doing a solid spell of work for posterity, which represented itself to the stout seamen, chiefly, as has been remarked, under the shape of the British cruiser doing perennial battle with imperial Spain.

We pause, as our historian does, for one moment on the way, for the sake of those chords of softest harmony which nature has taught him to strike here and there in the midst of the discords, to note the island of Quibo—paradisiacal vision which burst upon the seaman's sight when once more the monotony of the waves had begun to tell on him. Not in search of the picturesque, but of wood and water, more urgent necessities, had the squadron sought this second Isle of Rest. "Never was such a place for these needful purposes," says our Chaplain. "The trees grow close to the high-water mark, and a large rapid stream of fresh water runs over the sandy beach into the sea;" as if for once nature had thrown aside her tricksy ways, and soberly provided for her sailors' wants. Nor is the place without curiosities: there are pearl oysters in heaps along the sea-margin, and turtle in such quantities that the wanderers carried away a month's supply, to their much comfort and benefit. But these material blessings were not all. The Commodore, while exploring the island, came upon something which moved him, silent man, to us saying nothing about it, as only a poetic soul can be moved. The Chaplain speaks as if he had not been present at this exploration; and if so, the impression it made must have been vivid indeed to be thus transmitted to us at second-hand. It was a waterfall they saw; and here is Mr Walter's picture of it, fresh as of yesterday. No doubt the same water dashes over the same rock unchanged at this moment, though

the description has become a thing of the old world :—

"It was a river of transparent water, about forty yards wide, which rolled down a declivity of near a hundred and fifty in length. The channel it fell in was very irregular, for it was entirely composed of rock, both its sides and bottom being made up of large detached blocks; and by these the course of the water was frequently interrupted, for in some parts it ran sloping with a rapid but uniform motion, while in others it tumbled over the ledges of the rocks with a perpendicular descent. All the neighbourhood of this stream was a fine wood, and even the huge masses of rock which overhung the water, and which, by their various projections, formed the inequalities of the channel, were covered with lofty forest-trees. Whilst the Commodore and those accompanying him were attentively viewing this place, and were remarking the different blendings of the water, the rocks, and the wood, there came in sight (as if still to heighten and animate the prospect) a prodigious flight of mackaws, which, hovering over this spot, and often wheeling and playing on the wing about it, afforded a most brilliant appearance by the glittering of the sun on their variegated plumage, so that some of the spectators cannot refrain from a kind of transport when they recount the complicated beauties which occurred in this extraordinary waterfall."

There is something in the circumstantial simplicity of this picture—a certain sense of novelty in the idea of describing such a thing as a waterfall at all, and in the suggestion with which it is introduced—that (in the Commodore's opinion) "it surpassed . . . everything of this kind which human art or industry had hitherto produced!" which is very quaint and characteristic. The science of the picturesque was a novel science in those days; and perhaps even our Chaplain—though his eye is so clear, and his ima-

gination cannot refuse to be moved, even at second-hand, by this grand ravine in the lonely isle, kept by God for his own pleasure up to that moment—has still a lingering belief that Kent or Brown, the landscape gardeners, might yet produce a masterpiece to match it. Such was the fashion of his time.

The squadron then proceeded to Acapulco, about the shores of which they lingered from January to May, fondly imagining for a long time that they were in time to intercept the galleon, or to snap her up on her return voyage. But the galleon had arrived before Anson reached the coast, and was stopped in her return by the governor of the place, an uneasy consciousness of the English sea-lion prowling about those lonely waters having crept over the Mexican shore. When the Commodore had at last and reluctantly admitted that hope was over, nothing was left for it but to turn his back upon those "opulent coasts," and follow his original plan, which was to make for the port of Macao on the way to England and the civilised world. It was not a cheerful resolution, nor was the voyage a cheerful one. The comparative calm which they had for so long enjoyed, the constant neighbourhood of pleasant isles where wood and water and rest might be had when needed, the excitement of burning towns and taking prizes, had now to be exchanged for a dreary voyage across the Pacific, in which they had neither experience nor information to guide them, but had once more to grope their way unsustained by any exciting hope. The

galleon faded like a dream from the monotonous sky; weary weeks of sea, unbroken by a sail, or an islet, or an adventure, followed the excitement and variety of their cruise, and with the natural effect. They had calculated on making their passage to China, with the help of the trade-wind, in about two months; but this auxiliary failing them, they found themselves with scarcely a fourth part of their voyage accomplished when seven weary weeks had passed. Monotony, disappointment, and privation took heart and courage from the men; and, as a natural consequence, notwithstanding all their precautions, their abundant supply of water, their stock of turtle, their anxious attention to ventilation and cleanliness (on which the Chaplain specially insists—a man before his age), their deadliest enemy, scurvy, again appeared among them. By this time the prizes had all been sacrificed, the survivors of the crews being inadequate even to the manning of the two English ships. Now, in the midst of the dull Pacific, the Gloucester's days were numbered. With sprung masts, starting planks, seamen fainting at the pumps, and all round them a hopeless horizon, waste of sky and sea, with no refuge hidden in it to encourage them to prolong the hopeless struggle—no other end was possible. In August, when already the two ships had been for more than three months labouring along their weary course, the Gloucester, emptied of her crew and such of her stores as could be got at, fired off her guns solemnly one by one as the fire reached them, and went down in sul-

len smoke and dull explosion into the sea, the Centurion looking sadly on from a distance. Henceforward the Commodore was alone on the untracked waste, vexed by contrary winds, and calms almost as contrary, with a leak in his ship which could not be subdued, with eight or ten or sometimes twelve burials a-day—his few sound men failing, and nothing in the shape of land yet appearing out of the obdurate blank. Over the dull level of the seas brooded a dull ignorance more trying still. He thought they must be driving to the leeward of the Ladrone Islands. He feared that the eastern coast of Asia would prove the nearest land—a coast upon which at that moment the monsoon was at its height, so that the strongest ship would find it impracticable; and the men kept dying, the water rushing in. Black despair came upon the sickening crew—when lo! suddenly out of the mists uprose the joyful speck of green, which meant safety and healing, and the tragic strains once more drop into soft pastoral breathings of tranquillity and rest.

The isle of consolation this time was Tinian, one of the Ladrones, a paradise of fruit and plenty, where the sick speedily came to, and the healthy took courage. The place was so beautiful that our Chaplain here pauses to compliment nature. It "did by no means resemble an uninhabited and uncultivated place," he says, "but had much more the air of a magnificent plantation, where large lawns and stately woods had been laid out together with great skill, and where the whole had been so artfully combined,

and so judiciously adapted to the slopes of the hills and the inequalities of the ground, as to produce a most striking effect, and to do honour to the invention of the contriver"—a kind of praise most quaintly characteristic of the eighteenth century. Bread-fruit, cocoa-nuts, oranges, and vegetables of all kinds—not to speak of herds of wild cattle, fowls, and pigs—made the island celestial. But it is chiefly memorable as the scene of a most moving and almost tragic accident, which might have been the most serious of all they had yet encountered. A sudden storm came on one night while the Centurion lay in the bay with less than half her crew on board, her guns unsecured, her shrouds loose, her topmasts unrigged, her Commodore and most of her officers on shore. In the darkness of the sudden tropical storm the luckless ship was driven out to sea, dragging her anchor; and when the morning broke, not a trace of her could the wistful sailors see from Tinian as they strained their anxious eyes over the desolate ocean. Nothing but a miserable little Indian boat of fifteen tons burthen had they left; and the only alternative to the total loss of the Centurion with which the deserted could console themselves was the idea that she might still make her way to Macao and save herself if not them. The Commodore, not more hopeful in reality than his men, put at least a better face upon it. He had been ill with scurvy himself, as was not wonderful, and had consequently removed to a tent on shore, pitched, according to the instinct for the beautiful which seems

to have been in the man, on "a most elegant spot." Here, after the first silent chill of discouragement, his busy brain found out an expedient of escape. Perhaps he believed in the possibility of using it, perhaps he only felt that it was necessary at all hazards to employ and keep a little hope in his five or six score wretches abandoned in the lonely seas. His proposal was to cut their little Indian ship in two, and lengthen her to such a size as might make it possible for her to embark the whole of them. After some hesitation on the part of the despairing men he got them set to work. The smith's forge was established on the shore; one party, with the Commodore himself working first among them (since their work was the hardest), cut down trees and sawed them into planks; another party attended to the commissariat. They made a little dock for their ship; they made even the bellows which were needful for the smith's part of the undertaking. All at once the solitary tropical island grew into a busy naval building-yard—the men working with not uncheerful readiness from daybreak till night, filling leafy Tinian with sounds of axes and hammers, and stirring shouts of industry. A few days after their labours began, an incident occurred, insignificant to the crowd, but which to the Commodore brought the bitterest pang he had yet known. A sail was seen on the horizon, which the sailors concluded with joy was their ship returning; but as they gazed, a second apparition came in sight behind the first, confounding them in their speculations.

Anson, silent as ever, a man of few words, turned his glass upon them, and discovered at once that there were two boats. A thrill of despair went through his heart. He immediately concluded that the Centurion had gone to the bottom, and that it was the remnant of the survivors who were thus making their painful way back to the island. The silent man said not a word to the eager and curious group around him, but turned into his tent and faced this last stroke in solitude, with such feelings as may be supposed. "There he passed some bitter moments in the full belief that the ship was lost, and that now all his views of further distressing the enemy, and of still signalling his expedition by some important exploit, were at an end." When, however, the Commodore, swallowing the anguish of disappointment, which for the moment had been too much for him, emerged again into the daylight, he found the two boats which had so disturbed him to be but Indian proas passing on some indifferent mission of their own, and went back to work at his shipbuilding, no doubt with a revulsion of feeling and new vigour in his courageous heart.

Three weeks, however, had come and gone, and the work was so far advanced that the day of embarkation in the enlarged vessel had been fixed, when one of the men, casting a careless eye upon the sea in some pause of his work in the sultry afternoon, suddenly saw the Centurion herself, and no other, bearing down upon the island. "The ship! the ship!" shouted the discoverer, setting off at full speed down

the hill, wild with sudden joy. One voice after another echoed the cry. A nimble lieutenant of marines catching up the shout, flew with it breathless to the spot where Anson, at the head of his people, was calmly labouring at his logs. The Commodore threw down his axe: "for the first time," says our Chaplain, "his joy broke through the equable and unvaried character which he had hitherto preserved." The humbler workmen round following his example, flew helter-skelter to the beach "in a kind of frenzy," scarce daring to believe their eyes. The Centurion, meanwhile, had been having her own troubles for these three weeks, but was here safe and sound at last, making home, England, even Manilla galleons and distress of the enemy, still practicable to all.

After such an adventure, it is but natural to suppose that nobody desired to linger in a spot where danger of so desperate a kind could never be completely guarded against. They made all speed, accordingly, to get to sea; and after a voyage of nearly a month, comparatively without events, got to the Chinese coast; and with a satisfaction which it is easy to realise after a two-years' cruise, interrupted by so many moving incidents, found themselves in "an amicable port and a civilised country"—the port, to wit, of Macao, where they found letters and news from home for the first time since the commencement of their voyage, as well as the naval stores and other necessities of which they were destitute. Did our space permit, the story of Anson's negotiations with

the authorities, Portuguese and Chinese; his humorous solemn assumption of state; the most well-looking of his crew dressed up in marine uniform to receive a Celestial visitor, and all the punctilios of a representative of his country set up at a moment's notice to impress the Chinamen not only with the importance of the visitor, but with the superlative claims of his nation to instant attention and honour —might amuse the reader. He had a great deal of trouble to get the repairs he wanted, and various very solemn interviews with the mandarins, to whom he gravely pointed out the improbability of his men, however patient, starving in the midst of plenty, while strong enough to take what they wanted; and "to this the Commodore added, that if by delay of supplying him with provisions, his men should, from the impulses of hunger, be obliged to turn cannibals, and to prey upon their own species, it was easy to be foreseen that, independent of their friendship to their comrades, they would, in point of luxury, prefer the plump well-fed Chinese to their own emaciated shipmates!" "The first mandarin acquiesced in the justice of this reasoning," adds the Chaplain; with the mild inward laugh which befits his position.

And here, alas! our Chaplain leaves us, getting permission from his Commander, along with two or three other travel-worn officers, to return home by a ship which was just leaving the port. The cruise and its dangers and excitements were over, as everybody believed; and the Centurion, too, as soon as

she had got herself put in sailing trim, was to follow. So everybody thought, and so the silent Commodore let them think, keeping a close eye upon his stores, his repairs, everything necessary for the long voyage before him, and meanwhile turning his own plans over in his deliberate self-sufficing mind. It was only when he had left the port, bound, as the world supposed, for Batavia and England, with Dutch letters on board for the Dutch port, and not a doubt of his destination on any mind either aboard or ashore, that he called his people to him on the quarter-deck, and opened his mind to them. That galleon! could they go back to England without it, leaving the Spaniard to brag of their failure? Were they to acknowledge themselves foiled, and give in, English seamen not understanding the meaning of such words? It had wellnigh broken his heart to give it up that time when he thought the Centurion lost; and now Batavia and the Dutch letters must take their chance—the galleon was the port to which he was bound. The sailors, clustering round to listen, answered, as sailors could not choose but answer to such a proposition, "with three strenuous cheers," and about went the ship, every soul in her walking on air. Hopes, which had been abandoned by everybody but the Commodore, sprang up again in full luxuriance; "they should yet be repaid the price of their fatigues, and should at last return home enriched with the spoils of the enemy." All the misfortunes of their former voyages seem to have died out

of the memories of the men—not a doubt of their success occurred to them. When the Commodore asked for mutton, his steward pathetically begged leave of his honour to keep the two sheep which were left for the entertainment of the general of the galleons. This time the crew, as one man, felt convinced they could not fail.

Nor did they. The doomed galleon approached from among the islands serenely unconscious of the weather-beaten man-o'-war that waited for her. Even when she perceived her enemy advancing, with short-lived courage she advanced upon him, trusting in her greater size and more numerous guns and men. It is needless to repeat the particulars of the usual story. In about two hours' time the big Spaniard struck her flag. The Commodore reappeared, to the amazement of the Chinese, within three months of his leaving, in the port of Macao, with a prize half as big again as his own ship; twice his own number of men kept fast, with such mercifulness as was possible, in the Centurion's hold; and such masses of virgin silver and heaps of shining pieces-of-eight as the imagination refuses to reckon, making a moonlight splendour in the old Centurion's lockers. At last he had done the piece of work he had set his heart on—so much against Carthagena, so much to stop the Spaniard's bragging mouth. And now our sailor had the heart to go home.

The total amount of treasure taken altogether by the Centurion amounted to £400,000, "independent,"

adds the historian, eager to make his hero's full merits clear, "of the ships and merchandise which she either burnt or destroyed, and which, by the most reasonable estimation, could not amount to so little as £600,000 more; so that the whole damage done the enemy by our squadron did doubtless exceed a million sterling. To which if there be added the great expense of the Court of Spain in fitting out the Pizarro, and in paying the additional charges in America incurred on our account, together with the loss of one man-of-war, the total of all these articles will be a most exorbitant sum, and is the strongest conviction of the utility of this expedition, which, with all its numerous disadvantages, did yet prove so extremely prejudicial to the enemy." With this utterance of calm exultation the Chaplain winds up the extraordinary tale. And surely, though we may have changed our minds a little about the Christian duty of being thus "prejudicial to the enemy," there never was a story of wholesale plunder and destruction more splendidly relieved by those qualities which are among the highest possessed by human nature, and which the one thing most fatal to humanity, war, has ever had most share in calling out—dauntless courage, steadfastness beyond compare, patience, devotion, loyalty, a dutiful and unhesitating obedience in the face of every difficulty, a noble, silent, magnanimous reign of one man over his fellows. Be the object what it might, such a narrative could not but move the hearts of men; and the object, as Anson

saw it, was, by his lights, one of the purest principles of patriotism—to magnify, glorify, and enrich his country—to make the very name of her a terror and power—to make her feared by the greatness of the pains she could inflict, yet loved for the unparalleled mercy she could extend. Such was his aim, inarticulate, and never put into words; but written in fire and flame, in panic-stricken and grateful hearts, along all the shores of that Southern Sea. The galleon and its ingots were necessities of the work—the garment of fact and potential secondary impulse which are indispensable to human action, but not its pervading motive, nor anything but a big shadow upon its simple heroic soul.

The fine climax of the story—the sudden, silent, swoop into the Southern Seas, and stroke as of fate upon the long-dreamed-of victim—is told with less picturesque effect than the other part of the voyage. We miss our Chaplain's eye, which was ever open to those details which make up a picture. Time does not permit us to follow him into his more philosophical chapters—not even into the story of the galleon itself, and all the precautions observed upon its yearly voyage; or his grave survey of the effects which might and ought to have followed had the squadron but started a little earlier. The only other quotation we shall make is one interesting only as showing what a strange sarcasm a hundred years can make out of words spoken in the most perfect gravity and good faith. The writer is discussing the probable results of

his Commodore's generous treatment of the Spanish captives:—"Nor let it be imagined," he says, "that the impressions which the Spaniards thus received to our advantage is a matter of small import; for, not to mention several of our countrymen who have already felt the good effects of these prepossessions, the *Spaniards are a nation whose good opinion of us is doubtless of more consequence than that of all the world besides!*" Strange whirligig of time which brings about so many revenges! Whatever the future may be which remains for this extraordinary nation, where is there a people in the world whose good opinion is of so little importance now?

Anson had the gratification of bringing at once the news and the results of his good fortune to England without being forestalled by any flying rumour. In the very Channel he escaped, without knowing it, a danger as great as any of those he had more painfully surmounted in the Pacific, having sailed through the midst of a French fleet in a fog, which concealed him from them, with all his dollars on board. "Anson is returned with vast fortune," writes Horace Walpole in June 1744. "He has brought the Acapulco ship into Portsmouth, and its treasure is computed at five hundred thousand pounds." The latter circumstance, however, is a mistake: Anson sold his galleon at Macao, and came home in the Centurion, valiant old hulk, the only one which had survived the cruise.

It is very strange, after the clear revelation of this man which has come to us among the waves and seas,

to find him disappear the moment he touches English ground. If it is the want of our Chaplain, whose office in nature it was to elucidate his silent Commodore, or if it is that his work was done, and humanity had henceforth no need of him, it is hard to tell; but the fact is very clear that he disappears forthwith from all knowledge of man. True, he won a victory over the French three years after, notable enough in its way, and was made a peer, and has left honourable Ansons after him to the present generation. He was even promoted to be a Lord of the Admiralty ten years later, in which capacity Lord Waldegrave reports of him, that "Lord Anson, as usual, said little;" though it is found "he had done everything in his power that our fleet might be in the best condition." He held this appointment for a very short time, but seems to have been again called to office at a later period. "He was in reality a good sea-officer," Lord Waldegrave says, with a certain fine patronage, "and had gained a considerable victory over the French in the last war" (Cape Horn and Paita and the galleon evidently not considered worth speaking of!) "but nature had not endowed him with those extraordinary abilities which had been so liberally granted him by the whole nation." Thus the fine stream of story sinks into the mud of contemporary gossip and loses itself, gleaming out now and then, soiled with the witty insinuations of that sweet-spoken age, in Horace Walpole's letters. The narrative of the great sailor's voyage is "very silly and

contradictory," Horace thinks, jeering nastily at our Commodore. Fortunately posterity, in that as in some other things, has not been of Horace's opinion. "A real poem in its kind, or romance all fact: one of the pleasantest little books in the world's library at this date," says Carlyle. A book all reality, full of a straightforward occupation with its own business, which is one of the highest evidences of truth.

Thus arose, without preface or exposition, one of the few men of the eighteenth century who had an absolute and most distinct piece of work to perform in the world. He did it, "as usual, saying little;" and, having done it, subsided into that peaceable obscurity upon which even a peerage throws little light. The modesty of his exit chimes in with our favourite ideal of that British sailor whom England loves. There were incompetent admirals enough, as there were incompetent generals, in his time. Anson alone handed down out of one century into another, to Nelson and all his captains, the old glorious English tradition of empire over the sea.

IX

THE PHILOSOPHER

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THERE are few things in history more curious than the position which philosophy has occupied in the world since ever men began to think upon their thoughts. By general consent the title of a great philosopher has been allowed to represent the highest eminence to which the human mind can attain. Something more stable and not less divine than poetry, more lofty and comprehensive than mere science, more searching than theology, more profound than ethics — embracing and transcending common reason, common observation, all the best gifts of ordinary mortals—this noblest of pursuits has everywhere taken the foremost rank in the opinion of the world. It reveals itself out of the depths of antiquity the oldest of all studies. Before physical science had come into being, or when it existed but as a series of distorted guesses at the wonders of external nature, philosophy was. Though it has changed with every changing generation, de-

veloped, waned, undergone countless revolutions, there has been no break in the thread of its continuous labour. How charming is divine philosophy! There is no intellectual occupation to which the common mind yields such unvarying reverence. Poetry is to some but a light art, a minstrel's song, half amusement, half waste of time. Of science, even at the present day, and much more in former ages, men have asked, *Cui bono?* but it is a kind of instinct in humanity (as appears) to respect philosophy. There is no educated man of the present or of many preceding generations, who would not take shame to himself if obliged to confess that he knew nothing of, or had no sympathy with, this science of the soul. We may scoff at the unpractical tendency of abstract thought, at its exaggerations, its unrealities, its want of a true hold upon the steady soil; but yet there is not one of us who is not more or less impressed by the often misapplied title of "the greatest thinker of his age." We may—nothing more probable—dislike the bearer of that title, disapprove of him, feel that by very excess of logic he makes himself futile; yet we cannot contest the supremacy it confers.

And thus, looking back along the line of ages, there appears to us a line of great figures—figures almost more notable in their calm than those of the greatest practical agents the world has seen. Bacon, for example, in the rich Elizabethan age. The greatest of English poets is on the same scene, and with him a sovereign of personal note and mark, great statesmen,

and some of the most picturesque and noble gentlemen—Sidney, Raleigh, Essex—that ever adorned England. Yet, even in presence of Shakespeare, it is difficult to say that Bacon is not the most illustrious; for his deeds? alas! no—his deeds damn the man; but because of his transcendent eminence as a philosopher. It is thought, and thought only, that gives him his supremacy. It is needless to pursue through history the names of those who have won on the same ground a long-enduring fame. Yet the science which has conferred this fame has become in modern times the most unsatisfactory, the least beneficial, the most unpractical of all knowledges. Amid the busy world, in which every man has his work to do and his burden to bear, to walk over real thorns that tear his flesh, and burning ploughshares that penetrate to the bone, the greatest thinkers have but lived to prove that nought is everything and everything is nought. Their researches have only led them to the conclusion that nothing can be found out. It is the labour of Sisyphus, never ending, still beginning, which has cast over them the mist of splendour through which posterity beholds them. Instead of expanding our horizon and bringing new truths to our knowledge, the only practical issue of their labours has been to reduce the number of our beliefs and make us uncertain of all things. Each new thinker who has risen in the world of modern philosophy has taken something from us. Even the concession grudgingly made by

one has been annulled by his successor. Let one man afford us the cheering certainty that our consciousness is a reality, and that we can know and be sure that we live; another comes after him to declare, no: that Something lives of which we are a part; Something which we cannot understand, yet may believe; and that this Something is the sole reality in the universe. If one grants us the power of perceiving the image of things so truly as to be able to trust in our conception of them, another contradicts him with the assertion that the images alone exist, while of the things we can have no assurance; and a third follows with the still more disheartening warning, that we must not trust even those images, our minds being like a distorted mirror, full of false reflections. A discouraging, humiliating, unadvancing science, making progress, perhaps, in method and form, but, so far as result goes, arriving only at the conclusion that it is itself a delusion and impossibility. All other knowledges have contributed something to the common stock of human profit: philosophy alone has given us nothing. She has bidden us believe that we live as shadows in an unreal world—that nature and all her glories are but the phantasmagoria of a dream—that the skies and the winds are but so many notions of our own uneasy, restless brain. While we, the ignorant, have been roaming, not uncheerily, about a world full of sunshine and of moonlight, she has groped on from one darkness to another, losing a faculty, a faith, a scrap of feeble certainty, at every

step. Such is the story as traced even by her own votaries. Yet it is this constantly-failing, constantly-dissatisfied science which has given their chief title to immortality to some of the names most known and famous in the ordinary world.

Let it be understood, to begin with, that the present writer has no pretensions to touch the history of philosophy as a philosopher should. It is with the eyes of the outside spectator, or, as the subject of this sketch expresses it, *the vulgar*, that we regard its strange, long-continued, unproductive toil. We do not attempt to take up its phraseology, or to explain its changes, so far as they come under our notice, from within, but from without. Without overstepping that barrier which separates the external sphere, in which everything is real to our rational faculties, from the interior, in which all is image and idea — some notion, we think, may be given of what was going on at a certain period in the inner circle, and how its movements affected, and were affected by, the outer shell of practical existence. The eighteenth century was full of philosophers and philosophisings, and yet it cannot in any way be described as a philosophical age. It is an age of rude contact, wild prejudices, petty motives, everything that is most foreign to the principles of pure thought. If there had been any practical tendency in the science to elevate men's minds, and bring them to a better atmosphere, a more fit opportunity for the exercise of its influence could not have been. But this is an

agency which no philosopher claims. In utter disinterestedness, without hope of gain or reward, the thinker goes on in his sphere within a sphere. Earth and its doings are nothing to him—men and their ways are beneath his notice. While the world beats the air in its fierce fever, while it fights and struggles with all the perversities of life, he stands, in the dim Camera Obscura of his own consciousness, gazing at the reflections of things turned topsy-turvy by the laws of nature. Is it a real world that is outside? No. It is but some phantasm, probably quite unlike the moving current of images that come and go. There are no things in his universe—there are but thoughts; or if anything exists besides thought, it is that Something—be it God, be it devil, be it matter or substance, or howsoever the word may change—a vast darkness, which no man can fathom or define. The great sea raging outside has little influence on the calm flux and reflux of his tidal river: now it ebbs to some bare unity, called, it may be, Idealism, it may be Sensationalism; now it rises in a tide infinitesimally greater, to acknowledge a duality of mental power. In endless succession come those fallings and flowings. The spiritual conception rises with Descartes, rises with Spinoza, ebbs with Hobbes, begins to mount again with Locke, swells to a spring-tide in Berkeley, falls back to the lowest water-mark in Hume and the philosophers of the Revolution. Yet how small a space is represented in this coming and going! From Descartes, who was sure of himself, to

Hume, who was sure of nothing, the distance is scarce so much as might be represented by the line of glistening pebbles or muddy bank between high and low water-mark. And so far as the big universe was concerned, these great thinkers might have been but so many children weaving their endless bootless games upon the margin of the stream. Man knew as much and as little of himself at the end as at the beginning. He knew as little of the speechless forces round him; he was as ignorant of whence he came and whither he was going. It may be said that true philosophy proposes no end to itself, and is beyond all vulgar longings after a result; but we reply, that our estimate of its extraordinary, brilliant, and bootless labour—a labour which has confessedly occupied some of the finest intellects in the world—is made from without, and not from within. No one questions the strange interest of these inquiries to all who get within the magic circle. But to what purpose is this waste? asks the bewildered spectator; and neither from within nor from without is there any reply.

The reigning philosophy of the time was that of Locke, when George Berkeley came into the world; one of those serious moderate compromises between two systems of which the English mind seems peculiarly capable. Rejecting as untenable the philosophy which deduced everything from individual consciousness, and yet not material enough to deny some power to the mind itself in conjunction with the senses,

Locke formed the conception of a double action always going on in those dark recesses of the human intellect which have never yet given forth their secret to any inquirer. His decision was, that though sense supplied the mind with all its materials, yet there was in the mind a certain power of reflection and rumination over the material supplied which made every final conclusion a joint process effected by two powers acting together—experience bringing in the corn, but reflection grinding it in the mill. According to this theory, no innate principle, no intuitive certainty, belonged to man. True, he might move about among the phantasms of earth with a certain vulgar external sense of their reality, but to know any one thing exactly as it is, was for ever denied to him by laws immutable. His own ideas of things were all his possession; they might not even resemble the things themselves, and probably did not — but they were all to which he could attain. The ground on which he walked presented to him certain appearances of verdure, beauty, solidity, various and extended surface; but these were but impressions made on his senses, combined and accumulated by his intellect, and not, so far as he knew, affording even a fair representation of the earth in its own individuality. And yet the earth possessed an individuality, and a something, a substance, whatever it was, really existed. With these impressions, Locke insisted, it was meet that man should be satisfied. Satisfied or not, he had reached the end of his

tether. To go farther was impossible—to gain anything like absolute knowledge was impossible: the contentment thus enjoined might be to an eager spirit only the forlorn and pathetic resignation of a being blindly stumbling among the ghosts of things; but to Locke's calm and unexaggerated intelligence it was the reasonable contentment of a creature born to no better enlightenment, able to derive pleasure and pain, though not knowledge and certainty, from the shows of nature, and bound to make a virtue of necessity, and put up with its inevitable deprivations. Most men do so without finding any difficulty in the matter; and it was fit and right that they should do so, concluded the philosopher, with a calmness and moderation which were indeed the characteristic sentiments in his case of philosophical despair. He was resigning his own science when he said it. "Locke gave up philosophy as hopeless," says Mr Lewes. To this point had the silent tide crept up when Berkeley came into the world.

And here the spectator who knows the age will brighten with a thrill of warmer interest. The philosopher who was about to awaken the discussions, the laughter, the ridicule of the eighteenth century, is no abstract being shut up in a fictitious world. In him life gives no contradiction to fame. There is not a spot in his existence for which his warmest admirer need fear the light of day. Bishop Berkeley was not only a philosopher, he was a man. His being was not starved upon the meagre fare of speculation, but

nourished by all the generous currents of existence. A life full of active service to his kind, full of the warm impulses of a spontaneous, frank, open-hearted Irish nature — a sensibility so keen as to lead him even to Quixotisms and oddities of kindness—give such a warm background to his philosophy as no other great thinker within our recollection can equal. A man who is ready, at an age when men are supposed to consider their own comfort, to sacrifice himself in one of the least comfortable of missions; a man moved in later years to pause in his philosophy in order to promulgate tar-water—grand specific for all the physical ills of humanity; one who feared neither poverty nor neglect nor derision for what seemed to him at the moment the best he could do for his fellow-creatures,—is such a man as is rarely met with in the sphere of philosophy. No mental system has called forth such contemptuous criticism, rude laughter, and foolish condemnation—none has been denounced as so visionary and unreal; yet Berkeley is the one philosopher of modern times who brings the race within the warmest circle of human sympathies, and casts a certain interest and glow of light from his own nature upon metaphysics themselves.

He was born in the county of Kilkenny, in March 1684, of one of those families of English colonists who have so curiously affected the history and character of Ireland. He himself was of the second generation after the immigration of the household, and

presents himself to us with so many of the best features of the traditional Irishman that it is difficult to refrain from identifying him with that busy, eloquent, restless Celtic genius which common opinion has given to the country of his birth. There are no details but the driest of his youth. He was educated, in the first place, at Kilkenny School, then taught by a Dr Hinton, and at fifteen was admitted a pensioner of Trinity College, Dublin. Wealth there seems to have been none to make his family conspicuous; and their descent from the Berkeleys of Stratton was apparently illegitimate, and did not count. His extreme youth at the time of his entering the University would seem a sign that his great powers had been early developed; and it is apparent that his vivacious temperament, and the ferment of universal rebellion against recognised views and modes of thought so common to young men of genius, soon drove him into utterance. His first publications were upon mathematical subjects, and one of them, at least, was written before he was twenty. At twenty-three he was admitted Fellow of his College, and two years after published his *Theory of Vision*, a work which we cannot here discuss, but which Mr Lewes tells us, in his *History of Philosophy*, made "an epoch in science." Up to this moment no light except the feeblest twinkle of history falls upon the young man. How he lived, or what were his surroundings, are matters entirely invisible to us. "He was much addicted to reading" the "airy visions of romances," his biographer tells us, not without an in-

sinuation that these studies helped "to give birth to his disbelief of the existence of matter." The connection is one which we fear it would be difficult to trace, though the suggestion is delicious. The romances with which Berkeley amused his eager and manifold intelligence must have been those splendid fictions of the school of the *Grand Cyrus*, which little Lady Mary Pierrepont a few years before was reading in her nursery.

But the young philosopher, it is evident, did not confine himself to fiction. "Disgust at the books of metaphysics then received in the University, and that inquisitive attention to the operations of the mind which about this time was excited by the writings of Mr Locke and Father Malebranche," concurred with his novel-reading to incline him towards a new system of thought. And it is evident that there were in Berkeley other elements at work, differing from the ordinary motives of the philosopher. Though there is no want of candour in his reasoning, nor any disingenuous attempt at the probation of any system distinct from that of metaphysics, there is a foregone conclusion essentially unphilosophical in his mind from the outset. It is "in opposition to sceptics and atheists"—it is "to promote" not only "useful knowledge," but "religion," that he gives forth his philosophy to the world. This motive gives warmth and force to his words, and heightens every energy of thought within him; but it is not the passionless search for truth, whatsoever that truth might happen

to be, which is the ideal temper of philosophy. One can imagine the young man's nature rising into a glow of pious enthusiasm—high indignation with the frivolous doubting world around him—a passion of lofty eagerness to change the spirit and atmosphere which fills his country and debases his age. Under all the measured composure of his demonstrations, this light of meaning glows subdued, like the sunshine through the golden-tinted marble which serves for windows, as many of our readers will remember, on that Florentine hill where San Miniato watches the dead. He is betrayed not by any act or even word, but by the intense still light of purpose and meaning in all his speculations. Each step he takes conducts him not into new and undiscovered lands, where each inch of space may, for aught he knows, contain a discovery, but, with a steady regularity and stateliness, to one great point at which he has aimed from the beginning. He has covered over the cross on his buckler, and fights for the moment in armour which bears no cognisance; but yet he is as truly, according to his perceptions, the champion of religion, as if he wore the outward appearance of a Crusader. It is curious enough, and looks like a kind of natural punishment for this beautiful and touching disingenuousness, that Berkeley's idealism holds the place of a stepping-stone to the unmitigated scepticism of Hume. The strain was too great for the common mind, and produced a reaction; and the assumption by the idealist of all power and perception to the intellect alone, provoked

an examination of that intellect on the part of the sceptic such as nothing human can bear. But, we repeat, there is no disingenuousness in Berkeley's reasonings. They are even pronounced to be (philosophically) irrefutable—a fact which is no demonstration whatever, either of their truth or of the impracticability of other attempts equally irrefutable (philosophically) to prove them at once futile and foolish. So charming is divine philosophy!

But the impression we derive of Berkeley as a man, in the first outburst of his powers, is by just so much the more attractive and lovable as this secret meaning within him is unphilosophical. Such an ardent, impassioned, generous young soul, as those which, some forty years ago, facing the infidel world with all the fervour of youthful opposition made beautiful by piety, began that peaceful revolution in France, which has, alas! developed into Ultramontanism, and many things less lofty and lovely than Montalembert and Lacordaire; such a young knight of Christianity as about the same period the English Church gave birth to, among the earlier followers of Newman—to develop (again alas!) into Oratorists and Ritualists —was the Irish youth, fallen upon evil days for religion, surrounded by scepticism and that brutal free-thinking which belonged to the eighteenth century, reading Locke and Malebranche and the *Grand Cyrus* in his rooms at Trinity, and feeling his heart burn within him. Such a one, throbbing all over with spirit and soul and genius—half scornful of, half indifferent

to, the body which was, as he felt to his finger-points, but the docile servant of his glowing, swelling, creating mind—such a one to acknowledge that sense was all, or almost all, that man had to guide him! The fashion of the age did not run in the way of great missionary exertions in our sense of the word; and Berkeley had actually embarked in the tortuous ways of metaphysics. It is not difficult to imagine with what a silent ardour, with what light in his young eyes, he turned to elaborate his own system of thought. Philosophy is always free to do what youth is always inclined to; and that is, to spurn all previous foundations, and begin from the beginning for its own hand. Thus the field was open for the Idealist; no tradition of his science bound him to respect the theories which had preceded his. An iconoclast is nothing to a philosopher. Berkeley put his foot upon Locke without a moment's hesitation, and strode on to the often-contested and never-conquered field.

It was in the year 1710, when he was a young man of six-and-twenty, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, working with his pupils in the obscurity of an island much more distant in all practical ways from England than it is now, that the *Principles of Human Knowledge* were published. He does not seem in all his subsequent life to have gone beyond or much developed this early work. But in order to enable the ordinary reader, who is not a philosopher, to follow the true sense of his argument, it must be

permitted to us to pause once more and make clear the difference between the world of actual life and the world of philosophy. If the arguments belonging to the one are received as applying to the other, they are simple absurdities, such as no man other than a fool or madman could hold or dwell upon. Dr Johnson's "peremptory refutation," as Mr Lewes called it, of Berkeley's theory by the easy expedient of kicking a stone, and Reid's similar argument about breaking his head against a post or stepping into a dirty kennel, are simple sillinesses, strange though it may be to give such a name to the sayings of two such authorities. They suggest a confusion of the two worlds, quite excusable in the vulgar, but unpardonable in the learned. Outside everything is real to us. In our practical concerns we do not pause to discuss what images are imprinted on the eye, or what sounds on the tympanum. We hear and we see, which is quite enough for us. Neither do we pause to consider how it is that an impression of something snowy white or blazing crimson is conveyed to us when we look at a rose; the rose does not seem, but *is*, red or white. It is rich with perfume; it has thorns that prick and moss that clothes it. We walk on solid soil without for an instant contradicting reason by the supposition that the foot which strikes that steady surface, and the earth that receives it, are but phantasms of our senses. The most profound and the most ideal of philosophers walks abroad like other men, and accepts the ordin-

ary accidents of nature with that unhesitating natural conviction which he can no more contest than he can —doubt he ever so much—doubt his own existence. The stone and the post are as indubitable to him as to ourselves. Few philosophers have lived so healthful and full a material life as the man who denied the existence of matter; but then he never denied its existence in the outer sphere of fact and everyday reality. "That what I see, hear, and feel doth exist —*i.e.*, is perceived by me—I no more doubt than I do of my own being," says Berkeley. "I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sensation or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question." Out of doors, in common daylight, common air, in the life which he enjoyed fully, with all his young faculties strung to its pleasures and its wonders, Berkeley was as other men. A more than ordinarily keen observation of everything going on around him is apparent in his letters. The "horrible rocks" of the Alpine passes make his heart melt within him; the miseries he sees in France as he passes through it "spoil his mirth." Wherever he goes it is with open eyes, full of vivacity and human kindness. This is the world we live in, the world familiar and homely, whose facts are incontestable, whose delights console, whose horrors appal us. In respect to its stones and its posts, its roses and its landscapes, Berkeley is at one with all mankind.

But lift the curtain which hangs over the door of the philosopher's study, and it is a different world which you enter. He sits there in the silence, with his books round him, with his desk before him, a musing and bewildered creature, and asks himself what is real, and what is a vain show. In that silence there is but one thing that makes itself evident, so as no man can contradict it. He himself is—that is the point from which he starts. It may not, perhaps, be capable of elaborate demonstration, but yet it is, even by a philosopher, indisputable. He is there, but what are these visions around him? All that he can understand of the merest table or chair is, that it conveys a certain notion to his mind. The tree that looks in at his window is, he knows, not green in itself, but green by right of some property in his eyes that makes it so. His hand touches something on which he leans—what is it? But for the hand that touches, the arm that leans on it, the thing would have of itself no conscious being. What is it, then? What can we ever know about it? Folly to laugh at to the echo outside, but within actually the subject which has occupied for ages the closest thoughts of the greatest thinkers. The carpenter who made this bit of oak or mahogany into shape, no doubt, with open mouth and eyes, and with inextinguishable laughter, would tell the philosopher all about it; but the philosopher, for his part, knows nothing about it. He cannot tell how that dead thing can *be.* He looks at it on every side, and can make nothing of it. Is it the shadow

of some mysterious unknown thing which exists unseen, unfathomable, in the wide wastes of earth? or is it only so far as it impresses its likeness upon a seeing eye that it exists at all? This is the question he makes to the blank silence, which gives him no reply. The conclusion come to by the philosophy of Locke was, that a vast phantom called Matter did exist in the world—that houses and mountains, and even tables and chairs, *were*, in some shadowy way, because of this vast substantial soul, if such an expression may be used, which was behind them. As the soul lives, according to the Christian faith, because God lives, so things were, according to philosophy, because Matter was. What it was, how it was, or what connection it had with all these eccentric signs of its presence, nobody could tell, any more than anybody, unassisted by the light of revelation, can tell what God is, or how He unites Himself to His creatures. The other was an Earth-God, a kind of heavy inanimate soul to the inanimate universe. It brooded upon the depths a visible darkness. It found an Avatar, like the Hindoo Divinity, in every new development of solid shape and size. Such was the idea current in the darkling world of philosophy. We repeat, all this had no more to do with the ordinary globe than a chemical knowledge of its constituent parts has to do with the refreshing influence of a draught of water. Outside, all was plain matter of fact, indisputable reality, a world full of things and beings of many sorts and varieties; inside, there were

but, as it were, the shadows glimmering confused upon a mirror—sometimes growing into dark shapes, sometimes dispersing into mere vapour. To bring the processes, the reasonings of one world into another, would be simply absurdity. In the one, liberal nature takes everything for granted; in the other, nothing is believed, nothing allowed—everything put to severest examination. Without fully acknowledging and perceiving this distinction, and that with a candour and clearness which is not displayed by either Johnson or Reid, we can neither understand Berkeley's system nor that of any other great leader of (so-called) thought.

After this preface, we may venture to give such an indication as comes within the range of an ordinary observer of the views contained in the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, written when he was six-and-twenty, by the brilliant young Irishman, which, Mr Lewes tells us, "made an epoch in metaphysics." These principles are: That spirit, the unseen being of God and of man, is the only real and knowable existence in the world: that the Earth-God—the inanimate abstraction Matter, in which external things were supposed to live and have their being, as the soul lives and has its being in the life of God—is a mere invention of human fancy: and that we can form no conception of the world around us except as perceived by us. Such are the plain and simple foundations of Berkeley's system. From this it will be seen that much laughter was expended by the age, and

many shafts of dull wit shot at the philosopher which fell entirely wide of their mark. In these clear and simple principles there is nothing about the non-existence of stones or posts.

"The only thing," he says, "whose existence I deny, is that which philosophers call matter or corporeal substance. And in doing this," he adds, with a touch of humour, "there is no damage done to the rest of mankind, who, I daresay, will never miss it. . . . So long as we attribute a real existence to unthinking things distinct from their being perceived, it is not only impossible for us to know with evidence the nature of any real unthinking being, but even that it exists. Hence it is that we see philosophers distrust their senses, and doubt of the existence of heaven and earth—of everything they see and feel, even of their own bodies. And after all their labour and struggle of thought, they are forced to own we cannot attain to any self-evident or demonstrative knowledge of the existence of sensible things. But all this doubtfulness which so bewilders and confounds the mind, and makes philosophy ridiculous in the eyes of the world, vanishes if we annex a meaning to our words, and do not amuse ourselves with the terms absolute, external, exist, and suchlike, signifying we know what. I can as well doubt of my own being, as of the being of those things which I actually perceive by sense—it being a manifest contradiction that any sensible object should be immediately perceived by sight or touch, and at the same time have no existence in nature, since the very existence of an unthinking being consists in being perceived."

This, then, is the much-talked-of, much-laughed-at idealism of Berkeley. Like every other system of philosophy, it involves the disciple in a thousand difficulties. To say that the furniture of a room, that the landscape seen from the window, exist only when the inhabitant of that room beholds the one or the other, conveys (or would convey, were we outside in

the ordinary world) a manifest absurdity. But he is not without his answer to all such objections. "The table I write on I say exists—that is, I can see and feel it—and if I am out of my study, I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if I were in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it. . . . But, say you, there is nothing easier," he adds, "than to imagine trees, for instance, in a park, or books existing in a closet, and nobody by to perceive them. I answer, you may so, there is no difficulty in it. But what is all this, I beseech you, more than framing in your mind certain ideas which you call books and trees, and at the same time omitting to frame the idea of any one that may perceive them? but do not you yourself perceive or think of them all the while?" Thus the idea widens, gathering to itself all forces of imagination and memory. These outside mysteries of nature live in your perception of them, live in your thought of them. When darkness falls over the woods you know, and makes them invisible, are they not there alive, breathing, rustling under the night wind, in your thoughts? and if not even in your thoughts, how can you tell what benighted creature, desolate of all comforts, may haunt them, making the gloomy glades alive with the consciousness of a human eye? or what angel, leaning from the heavens, may charm them into reality? Or, higher still, does not God look and behold, giving them existence with His glance? "Some truths," says the philosopher, his gaze widening, his mind

swelling with an exaltation worthy his subject, "are so near and obvious to the mind that a man need only to open his eyes to see them. Such I take this important one to be—to wit, that all the choir of heaven and furniture of earth—in a word, all those bodies which compose the mighty frame of the world, have not any existence without a mind, that their *being* (*esse*) is to be perceived and known; that, consequently, so long as they are not actually perceived by men, or do not exist in my mind, or that of any other created spirit, they must either have no existence at all, *or else subsist in the mind of some eternal spirit.*" Where could there be found a theory more touching or more sublime? All the choir of heaven, and all the furniture of earth—all the little stars unnamed and unknown in their systems—all those unseen isles of paradise which lie in undiscovered seas,—hanging, as in their proper atmosphere, like the motes in the sunshine, in the light of the eyes of God! Never has a nobler conception filled the heart of any poet. The mind in which it had its origin has such a right to the name of Seer as falls to few of the most nobly endowed among men.

It is not within our range or sphere to follow this new system through the storm of argument, laughter, and discussion which it called forth. It is enough for us to state what the theory was, which even at this present day brings a smile to the lip of many an ignorant bystander at Bishop Berkeley's name. The strain of subdued enthusiasm and lofty poetry in the

book attracted many minds; and so did the close and unbroken chain of reasoning, of which Hume said, "that it admitted of no answer," although it produced no conviction. If the pretensions of philosophy are admitted at all, Mr Lewes tells us that Berkeley is irrefutable. "He failed, as the greatest philosophers of all times have failed, not because he was weak, but because philosophy was impossible," says the historian of philosophy. The book, a small octavo volume, never came to a second edition so long as its author lived, but yet became at once sufficiently known to win him some fame, and to puzzle the brains of the philosophical world. "Mr Berkeley published, A.D. 1710, at Dublin, the metaphysic notion that matter was not a real thing," says Whiston in the *Memoirs of Dr Clarke;* "nay, that the common opinion of its reality was groundless, if not ridiculous. He was pleased to send Dr Clarke and myself, each of us, a book. After we had both perused it, I went to Dr Clarke and discoursed with him about it to this effect, that I, being not a metaphysician, was not able to answer Mr Berkeley's subtle *premises*, though I did not at all believe his absurd *conclusion*. I therefore desired that he, who was deep in such subtleties, but did not appear to believe Mr Berkeley's conclusions, would answer him; which task he declined." Thus the young Irishman splintered his lance upon the world without finding any immediate champion to do battle with him. There was a pause of consternation in that misty,

doubtful, uncertain sphere. The old philosophy "did not appear to believe," but "declined the task" of replying. It was some time before it found breath and courage enough even to acknowledge the challenge.

For two years after this the young Fellow of Trinity remained in Dublin, no doubt doing his work with the joyful energy of his youth and enthusiastic temperament. During this time "the principles inculcated in Mr Locke's two treatises on Government seem to have turned his attention to the doctrine of passive obedience," says his biographer, "in support of which he printed the substance of three Commonplaces delivered by him that year in the College chapel." He himself explains this publication, by way of preface, with a mixture of that lofty optimism which distinguishes all his thoughts, and which so often carries men of his stamp, in their very pursuit of the highest good, into conjunction with the meanest tyrannies—and a frank straightforward opposition to the great antagonist he had chosen for himself, which is equally characteristic of the man. The age was not favourable to the doctrine of passive obedience; all its political order, in short, was founded upon a flat and practical contradiction of the theory. So far from passively obeying, England had but lately expelled her hereditary monarch, had set in succession two daughters of the exiled king upon his throne, and was now plotting the introduction of an altogether new family of rulers, leaving the old in banishment, in the hope that her new lords would do her will

instead of demanding of her that she should do theirs. Right or wrong; such was the principle rooted deeply by recent events in the heart of the nation. An opposite opinion meant at that moment Jacobitism, revolutionism, anything but devotion to the powers that be. In short, the title of the powers then actually existing to the obedience and devotion of the people was of so unreal a character that such a treatise at such a time looked very much like either rebellion or nonsense. Berkeley, however, meant it as neither. This is how he explains his curious exposition of duty:—

"That an absolute passive obedience ought not to be paid to any civil power, but that submission to government should be measured and limited by the public good of society; and that, therefore, subjects may lawfully resist the supreme authority in those cases where the public good shall plainly seem to require it—nay, that it is their duty to do so, inasmuch as they are all under an indispensable obligation to promote the common interest: these and the like notions, which I cannot help thinking pernicious to mankind and repugnant to right reason, having of late years been industriously cultivated and set in the most advantageous lights by men of parts and learning, it seemed necessary to arm the youth of our University against them, and take care they go into the world well principled; I do not mean obstinately prejudiced in favour of a party, but, from an early acquaintance with their duty, and the clear rational ground of it, determined to such practices as may speak them good Christians and loyal subjects."

Perhaps nobody but an Irishman could have sent forth in perfect good faith at such a crisis a work of such a kind. Queen Anne was sinking towards her end. It was the general meaning and expectation

that the new family, with no claims whatever upon the obedience of the nation, should be set in her place; and it is little wonder that this whimsical big bull should have been afterwards produced against Berkeley, when he was recommended for promotion to the new Majesties. In the long-run, happily, it did him no harm; nor is there the least trace that he had any intention of turning the eyes of the young fervid English-Irish community towards the exiled Stuarts, who alone, sacred in their divine right, could have any claim upon the passive obedience of their hereditary subjects. His aim was honestly to prove "that there is an absolute unlimited non-resistance or passive obedience due to the supreme power, wherever placed in any nation;" and unappalled by the amazing contradiction of circumstances around him, he worked out his theory with a calm as perfect as if the social order of the empire had never been disturbed.

A few months after this publication, he went to England for the first time, and was received with enthusiasm. The whole guild of literature seems to have opened its arms to the young philosopher. Steele on the one side, and Swift on the other, brought him into the heart of all the society of the day. Addison, at this or a subsequent time, was so much interested in him that he took the trouble of bringing about a meeting at his own house between him and Dr Clarke, in order to the discussion and reconciliation, if possible, of their differing views. Pope writes to

him that "my Lord Bishop Atterbury was very much concerned at missing you yesterday," and entreats him to "provide yourself of linen and other necessaries sufficient for the week; for as I take you to be almost the only friend I have that is above the little vanities of the town, I expect you may be able to renounce it for one week, and to make trial how you like my Tusculum, because I assure you it is no less yours, and hope you will use it as your own country-villa in the ensuing season." Atterbury himself, a more congenial spirit, adds his praise of the young adventurer in terms which seem high-flown to the sober ears of posterity. "So much learning, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and such humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels till I saw this gentleman," says the Bishop. Thus, universally admired and adopted by the wits, the young man's short career in "town" must have been a continued triumph.

He published, while in London, the *Three Dialogues between Hylas and Philonous*, in which his new system of philosophy was once more set forth and elucidated to the world. The form of dialogue was one which pleased the age; but it has radical disadvantages at all times, and especially when dealing with a subject so difficult. The reader cannot but feel that the hapless interlocutor, set up there to be driven into one corner after another, compelled to make the most damaging admissions, and finally beaten and triumphed over, is in every respect a man of straw,

rather enfeebling than strengthening, with his weak objections, the strain of the argument; nor are the dialogues so readable (although so evidently intended to be more readable) as the grave work which preceded them. What with this publication, and his warm reception by society, Berkeley's short stay in London must have been sufficiently full. He is said to have written several papers for the *Guardian*, only one of which, however, can be identified as his. He was introduced and recommended specially, it would seem, by Swift, who was one of his many friends, to that strange hero of romance the Earl of Peterborough, then about to start upon a mission as Ambassador to the Court of Sicily and other Italian States—and became his secretary and chaplain. In the suite of this remarkable and eccentric personage Berkeley left philosophy and England, and went out, wandering on an errant course which lasted for years, abroad into the world. He was still but nine-and-twenty, and yet this is something like the end of his purely philosophical career. Hereafter the young man, afloat in the full tide of life, finds other pieces of work to do, and matters thrown into his hands of which he had not dreamed. His intellect goes on in the activity inseparable from such a nature; but the silence and the leisure have gone from him. Henceforward he is in a busier scene, amid influences more urgent and less subtle. And we do not suppose that any other philosopher has proved himself capable of thus setting his mark upon the most difficult of all

sciences, and turning its stream into a new channel, before he had even attained the maturity of manhood. This Berkeley did while still under thirty; and thereafter went upon his way, not to forget or abandon the speculations of his youth, but yet to play the part of a man in a world too busy for philosophers, and to demonstrate what force of healthful vitality, what stout service and helpfulness, could exist in the prophet of Idealism, the destroyer of matter, the exponent of what, to so many sober-minded critics, has seemed the most fantastic of all creeds.

The young Irishman, thus setting out upon his travels with a reputation already at a height which only one or two men in a century ever gain—with manners and morals so high that only among the angels had Bishop Atterbury hoped to behold the like of him—with "every virtue under heaven" attributed to him by the most satirical of poets,—was, in addition to all this, endowed with that beauty of form and face which does not always accompany beauty of character. He was "a handsome man, with a countenance full of meaning and benignity, remarkable for great strength of limbs, and of a very robust constitution." A natural, genial, joyous young soul, the very best and highest type of the adventurer, going blithely out to face the world and seek his fortune; and yet already the author of works, one of which had "made an epoch in science," and the other an epoch in metaphysics! Such wonders happen but

rarely in this limited world. It is evident that he carried all that weight of learning lightly as a flower, and went away with the simplicity of genius, glad of opportunities of speaking French, and writing such letters to his "dear Tom" as any young Irish chaplain on his travels might have written. He was a week on the road between Calais and Paris in the stage-coach, but having "good company," did not mind. He was dazzled by the grandeur of everything he saw in Paris, finding there "splendour and riches" to pass belief, but "has some reasons to decline speaking of the country or villages that I saw as I came along." These reasons, as he afterwards permits us to divine, were "the poverty and distress," which he sadly allows to be enough "to spoil the mirth of any one who feels the sufferings of his fellow-creatures;" for we must not forget that it was the eighteenth century, and those awful seeds of oppression and wretchedness which produced the Revolution were already germinating. "I cannot help observing," he says, "that the Jacobites have little to hope, and others little to fear, from that reduced nation. The king, indeed, looks as if he wanted neither meat nor drink, and his palaces are in good repair, but through the land there is a different face of things." Evidently to the traveller matters appeared too serious to be talked of; and yet some eighty years passed before the awful explosion came!

"I was present," he adds, "at a disputation in the

Sorbonne, which, indeed, had much of the French fire in it;" and he goes on to say that he was about "to visit Father Malebranche, and discourse him on certain points." Of this meeting a curious story is told. The priest was in his cell when the young clergyman, heretic in more than religious faith, went to see him. He was discovered "cooking in a small pipkin a medicine for a disorder with which he was then troubled—an inflammation on the lungs. The conversation naturally turned on our author's system, of which the other had received some knowledge from a translation just published. But the issue of his debate proved tragical to poor Malebranche. In the heat of disputation he raised his voice so high, and gave way so freely to the natural impetuosity of a man of parts and a Frenchman, that he brought on himself a violent increase of his disorder, which carried him off a few days after." Thus Malebranche died of Berkeley in the most curious, tragi-comic way; and indeed few contrasts could be more striking than that of the old French priest in his cell, with his pipkin and his cough, shrill and worn, yet impetuous still, and the strapping young Fellow of Trinity, with the fresh winds blowing about him, and all his youthful powers in full vigour. He was a month in Paris, and made full use of his time; and his power of conversing with his fellow-travellers, and understanding disputations at the Sorbonne, full of French fire, is not one of the least of his acquirements. There are, alas! many Fellows of colleges, men full of philo-

sophy and fine attainment, who even in these travelling days might be found to hesitate at such a test.

From Paris the travellers went on to Italy, daring the dangers of the Mont Cenis pass on New-Year's Day—an experience which Berkeley seems to have found appalling enough. "I can gallop all day long, and sleep but three or four hours at night," he writes, from the sunny side of the Alps, to his dear Tom. The account of his travels contains, of course, nothing new to the modern reader; indeed he acknowledges, even at that period, that "Italy is an exhausted subject." Yet he does not hesitate to give a sketch of Ischia to Pope,—one of those little bare, yet not unsuggestive, descriptions of the "delicious isle" in which the age abounded. To Dr Arbuthnot, another of the friends his reputation had made for him among the wits, he sends his account of Vesuvius. Wherever he goes, it is with his eyes open, his mind intent upon the sight and understanding of all. This first expedition lasted not quite a year, but was immediately followed by a second, taken in charge of a pupil, a Mr Ashe, son of the Bishop of Clogher, who had previously been Provost of Trinity College. Between these two expeditions he had a fever, of which Arbuthnot writes to Swift with friendly playfulness. "Poor philosopher Berkeley has now *the idea of health*, which was very hard to produce in him," he says, "for he had *an idea* of a strange fever on him, so strong that it was very hard to destroy it by introducing a contrary one." Thus his friends, with kindly

jeers, smiled at the Idealist; as indeed it has been his fate to be pursued with jeers, not kindly, from that time until now.

He was absent for four years on his second expedition, and, it is apparent, made himself acquainted with the depths of Italy as few men can, even at the present day. Nor was he so much occupied with his travels as to abandon speculation. On his way home, stopping at Lyons in one of the many pauses of those slow journeys, he composed what his biographer calls "a curious tract, *De Motu*, which he sent to the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, the subject being proposed by that assembly." This paper "Concerning Motion" was afterwards published in London in the year 1721, and is in perfect agreement with the characteristic strain of Berkeley's philosophy, his theory being that all motion centres in God, the one great Mover of the universe. Even these abstruse reasonings, however, though carried on in conjunction with the cares of a traveller, were not sufficient to occupy his many-sided intelligence. In the same year, 1721, the period of the South Sea catastrophe, the eager Irishman, full of interest and concern in everything that affected his country, sent forth *An Essay towards Preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, which falls, with a mixture of quaint wisdom and simplicity, upon ears warped from the modesty of nature by those suggestions of political economy which were then unknown to the world. Berkeley's cure for the evils of his country is that simplest, most indubitable,

and yet most impossible of cures—that men should become better, wiser, and purer. "Whether the prosperity that preceded or the calamities that succeeded the South Sea project have most contributed to our undoing," he says, "is not so clear a point as it is that we are actually undone and lost to all sense of our true interest: nothing less than this could render it pardonable to have recourse to those old trite maxims concerning religion, industry, frugality, and public spirit, which are now forgotten, but, if revived and put in practice, may not only prevent our final ruin, but also render us a more happy and flourishing people than ever." The reader follows the argument with a certain reverential amusement, if we may use such words. This eighteenth century was the falsest and most artificial of ages, and yet what a depth of simplicity must have lain in the heart of a nation to which the philosopher could recommend, as to a primitive people, this noblest primitive remedy! Let every man become religious, modest, industrious, says the dreamer; where is the difficulty?—apart from any national crisis, is not this every man's duty, every man's highest interest?—and all will come right. The succeeding practical suggestions are even more utopian. He thinks "if the poor-tax was fixed at a medium in every parish, taken from a calculation of the last ten years, and raised for seven years by Act of Parliament, that sum (if the common estimate be not very wrong) frugally and prudently laid out in workhouses, would for ever free the nation from the

care of providing for the poor, and at the same time considerably improve our manufactures. We might, by these means, rid our streets of beggars;" he adds, in his simplicity, "even the children, the maimed, and the blind, might be put in the way of doing something for their livelihood. As for the small number of those who by age or infirmities are utterly incapable of all employment, they might be maintained by the labour of others; and the public would receive no small advantage from the industry of those who are now so great a burden and expense to it."

Had the philosopher lived to see the dreaded and hated workhouse of our own day, how strangely would he have been surprised by the result of his suggestions! He goes on to imagine how the same tax, "continued three years longer," might set our roads in order and render our rivers navigable; "so that in the space of ten years the public may be for ever freed from a heavy tax, industry encouraged, commerce facilitated, and the whole country improved"! Our genial reformer next proceeds to suggest "some reward or privilege to those who have a certain number of children," and that the public should "inherit half the unentailed estates of all who die unmarried of either sex"! Taxes upon "dead bachelors" he holds, with a delightful scorn of the creature, to be "in no sort grievous to the subject"! Nor does he let women altogether escape, though touching that chapter with a light hand, like the gallant gentleman he was. He would have sumptuary laws, restraining "the luxury

of dress which giveth a light behaviour to our women. He would have order taken with public amusements, the drama reformed, the masquerade abolished. He would have "a pillar of infamy" to mark the memory of the swindler with an odious immortality. He would have a "parliament house, courts of justice, royal palace, and other public edifices built" suitable to the dignity of the nation, with decorations of pictures and statues, in order "to transmit memorable things and persons to posterity," to "spirit up new arts, employ many hands, and keep money circulating at home;" though this project, he fears, would "be laughed at as a vain affair, of great expense and little use to the public." Last of all, he would encourage public spirit by "erecting an academy of ingenious men, whose employment it would be to compile the history of Great Britain, to make discourses proper to inspire men with a zeal for the public, and celebrate the memories of those who have been ornaments to the nation, or done it eminent service. Not to mention," he adds, with the quaint humour which now and then breaks in upon his grave argument, "that this would improve our language, and *amuse certain busy spirits of the age*, which, perhaps, would be no ill policy."

This essay holds no such important place among Berkeley's works as we give it here; and yet we know nothing which more illustrates the spirit of the man. Bits of true wisdom are in it, with interminglings of that fantastic theorising of which a "thinker" so called, seldom shakes himself absolutely free when he takes

to planning for the good of the outside world; yet how different, even in his most fantastic moment, how modest and sober, is our Idealist, in comparison with most intellectual dreamers! He was in London at the time the essay was written, seeing around him on every side the consequences of the national madness. And yet he was in very fine company, and made much of in the brilliant world when he reappeared from time to time bringing tidings with him, as it were, from the ends of the earth. One of the places where he is most visible to us at this distance is in the little philosophical parties which gathered round the Princess of Wales in her opposition Court in Leicester Fields. She gave the philosophers one evening in the week, and found recreation in their learned talk. "Of this company were Dr Clarke, Hoadly, Berkeley, and Sherlock. Clarke and Berkeley were generally considered the principals in the debates that arose on these occasions; and Hoadly adhered to the former as Sherlock did to the latter." Thus they discussed and rediscussed—Caroline, with her bright eyes, looking on, with the ready interest and keen wit which distinguished her. To such a little oasis of brightness and social enjoyment our wandering philosopher comes by times, gleaming out suddenly into the midst of the wit and the embroidery. But it never seems to have had the fascination for him that it had for Swift, nor did his lingering advancement and the unproductive character of royal friendship embitter the sweeter temper and gayer

heart of Berkeley. He went back to Ireland in 1721, as chaplain to the Lord-Lieutenant, without any apparent reluctance to leave the society even of Leicester Fields, and found there fortune and preferment awaiting him of which, probably, he had never dreamed.

The fortune came in the most curious way from a woman unhappily too well known to the world—the hapless and foolish creature whom Swift's love and indifference drove to distraction and death. Poor Vanessa, tragical, self-willed, despairing woman, had seen young Berkeley with her terrible hero in 1713, when she was at home and all was well with her; and in the rage and anguish of her deathbed, the unfortunate soul bethought herself of the young man who seems to have touched all the world with a feeling of his goodness. She left her whole fortune—wildly indifferent to her own kindred, wildly indignant with the man on whom she would fain have bestowed it—to be divided between Berkeley and another of her friends, though it was years since she had met the philosopher, and there seems to have been no special friendship between them. His share amounted to about £4000—no inconsiderable matter for a man without fortune. This curious incident does not seem to have made any breach in the friendship between himself and Swift, which is remarkable enough. A year or two later the preferment came in the substantial shape of the deanery of Derry, which was worth £1100 a-year.

By this time Berkeley was forty — not the most adventurous of ages. After long waiting, he had at length attained such a climax of his temporal hopes as justified him in marrying and settling, as people say. Marry he did after a while, but the idea of "settling" was far from having any place in his mind. Not quite six months after his appointment to the deanery we find him once more setting out for England with the strangest errand. Not philosophy this time, which in most previous cases had been found quite compatible with the strictest regard to a man's private interest. On the contrary, it was Quixotism of the wildest description, such as never philosopher had been known to be guilty of before. An idea had seized upon his busy brain more dangerous than any onslaught upon matter. It had occurred to him some fine day, no one knows how—in the learned babble of Leicester Fields perhaps, or on the Italian hills, or amid the salt spray on the shores of his own island —to think of certain ignorant savages far away over the seas, where a new English empire seemed forming on the shores of America. America itself was hidden in the mists of the future, and no premonition warned Dean Berkeley of that immeasurable Yankee nation which was so soon to come into being. It was "a scheme for converting the savage Americans to Christianity" that began to work in his teeming brain. The unhappy Red men, so dwindled, so miserable and hopeless, bore an interest then which it seems now strange to contemplate. Nobody knew how

they were to be swallowed up and pushed out of their places; and men had already dimly opened their eyes to the value of that great continent as a place big enough and rich enough to supply room for the overflowings of the mother country, however vast these overflowings might be. And in this case, how important was it to conciliate, and cultivate, and Christianise the native race! To be sure there were but two things to do—that, or exterminate them; and extermination had not dawned upon any mind as the preferable alternative as yet. Accordingly, the new Dean is scarce warm in his seat before this idea, howsoever conceived or suggested, begins to work so strongly in him that he cannot rest. Derry and £1100 a-year, and all the advantages of place and position, become as nothing in comparison with those savage Americans. Yet there is a certain statesmanlike calm even in his fervour. It is no wild solitary expedition on which he longs to set out. His scheme is to carry a staff with him—to go accompanied with his brotherhood, a colony of evangelists. Their work was to be done by means of "a college to be erected in the Summer Islands, otherwise called the Isles of Bermuda." In 1725 he published his plan for this expedition. He himself was to resign his appointment and become head of the college on the magnificent stipend of a hundred pounds a-year; and his eloquence and enthusiasm had so won upon his friends, that no less than three young Fellows of his University declared themselves

willing to accompany him, abandoning all their prospects. To gain an endowment for this college, Berkeley set out in the end of '24, armed with all the recommendations his friends could give him, to men powerful in Church and State. Here is one of these commendatory letters, which not only throws the vivid light of personal revelation upon Berkeley, but reveals out of the darkness, in one of his softest moments, a tragical figure, still more remarkable and universally known than himself. The letter is addressed to Lord Carteret, then Lieutenant of Ireland, and it is Swift who writes :—

"*3d of September* 1724.—There is a gentleman of this kingdom just gone for England—it is Dr George Berkeley, Dean of Derry, the best preferment among us, being worth about £1100 a-year. He takes the Bath in his way to London, and will of course attend your Excellency, and be presented, I suppose, by his friend, my Lord Burlington; and because I believe you will choose out some very idle minutes to read this letter, perhaps you may not be ill entertained with some account of the man and his errand. He was a Fellow in the University here, and, going to England very young, about thirteen years ago, he became the founder of a sect there called the Immaterialists, by the force of a very curious book on that subject. Dr Smalridge and many other eminent persons were his proselytes. I sent him secretary and chaplain to Sicily with my Lord Peterborough; and upon his lordship's return, Dr Berkeley spent above seven years in travelling over most parts of Europe, but chiefly through every corner of Italy, Sicily, and other islands. When he came back to England he found so many friends that he was effectually recommended to the Duke of Grafton, by whom he was lately made Dean of Derry. Your Excellency will be frightened when I tell you all this is but an introduction, for I am now to mention his errand. He is an absolute

philosopher with regard to money, titles, and power, and for three years past hath been struck with a notion of founding a university at Bermuda, by a charter from the Crown. He has seduced several of the hopefullest young clergymen and others here, many of them well provided for, and all of them in the fairest way of preferment; but in England his conquests are greater, and I doubt will spread very far this winter. He showed me a little tract which he designs to publish, and there your Excellency will see his whole scheme of a life academic-philosophic of a college founded for Indian scholars and missionaries, where he most exorbitantly proposeth a whole hundred pounds a-year for himself, forty pounds for a fellow, and ten for a student. His heart will break if his deanery be not taken from him and left at your Excellency's disposal. I discourage him by the coldness of courts and ministers, who will interpret all this as impossible and a vision, but nothing will do. And therefore I do humbly entreat your Excellency either to use such persuasions as will keep one of the first men in this kingdom for learning and virtue quiet at home, or assist him by your credit to compass his romantic design, which, however, is very noble and generous, and directly proper for a great person of your excellent education to encourage."

Berkeley's pamphlet, which was published early in the ensuing year, sets forth at length all the necessity and advantage of this wonderful scheme. He begins by lamenting "that there is at this day little sense of religion, and a most notorious corruption of manners in the English colonies settled on the continent of America and the islands," and that "the Gospel hath hitherto made but a very inconsiderable progress among the neighbouring Americans, who still continue in much the same ignorance and barbarism in which we found them above a hundred years ago." After summing up the causes of this

condition of affairs, one of which he describes as the mean qualifications, both in learning and morals, of the clergy, who are, in many cases, "the very dregs and refuse" of the Church, he propounds his plan—a plan which has been adopted in recent days with at least as much success, we believe, as has attended any other missionary scheme—of training young natives as missionaries to their countrymen. Conjoined with this was the prospect of being able to educate "the youth of our English plantations" to fill the colonial churches; but it was on the savages evidently that Berkeley had set his heart. Religion is failing, he thinks, in the Old World. "In Europe the Protestant religion hath of late years considerably lost ground, and America seems the likeliest place wherein to make up for what hath been lost in Europe." High dreams of a continent evangelised and a new world brightening into Christianity rise to his mind as he speaks. Nor is the scheme without its intermixture of romance. It was in "the Summer Islands" the college was to be planted—its principal with one hundred a-year, its fellows with forty. "Several gentlemen," he says, "in all respects very well qualified, and in possession of good preferments and fair prospects at home," were ready to engage in it—"to dedicate the remainder of their lives to instructing the youth of America and prosecuting their own studies in a retirement *so sweet and so secure.*

Such was the philosopher's dream. Rock-encircled islands, so defended by nature that foe or

pirate could not come near them, lavishly supplied with all that nature needs; tranquilly free from trade, yet with a little navy of sloops coming and going between them and the world; a vast sea around, which cools the hot breezes and softens the northern winds; a climate "like the latter end of a fine May;" tall cedars to shelter the orange-trees; the calm of philosophy, the light of love (for was not the missionary sage about to be married?), a splendid aim and a hundred pounds a-year! It was the most wonderful combination which ever presented itself to a dreamer's eye; a bower of bliss, an academic grove, and at the same time humanity regenerated and a new world won to God. No wonder the fervid Irishman haunted St James's like a ghost, and struggled to get rid of the rich prize of his deanery, its wealthy stipend and dignified leisure. He got his will so far as words went: after a long and tedious struggle he attained to a charter for his college and a (promised) grant of £20,000. His heart was so moved by his success, that, so far as we are informed, for the only time in his life Berkeley burst into song. His "success drew from our author," says his biographer, "a beautiful copy of verses, in which another age will acknowledge the old conjunction of the prophetic character with that of the poet to have again taken place." How far Berkeley would have consented to the realisation of his hopes as carried out in the strangely-different fashion intended by Providence is a different question; but yet the verses have

enough of that strange mixture of blindness and insight which we call the prophetic faculty, to merit a place in the record of his life:—

'VERSES ON THE PROSPECT OF PLANTING ARTS AND LETTERS IN AMERICA.

"The Muse, disgusted at an age and clime
Barren of every glorious theme,
In distant lands now waits a better time,
Producing subjects worthy fame.

"In happy climes, where from the genial sun
And virgin earth, such scenes ensue,
And force of art by nature seems outdone,
And fancied beauties by the true:

"In happy climes, the seat of innocence,
Where nature guides and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth or sense
The pedantry of courts and schools:

"There shall be sung another golden age,
The rise of empire and of arts,
The good and great inspiring epic rage,
The wisest heads and noblest hearts.

"Not such as Europe breeds in her decay;
Such as she bred when fresh and young,
When heavenly flame did animate her clay,
By future poets shall be sung.

"Westward the course of empire takes its way;
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is its last."

It is strange that these verses should never have been suggested by any enterprising American as the national anthem of the new empire—curiously falsified so far as Berkeley's meaning went, yet taking, like so many other bits of unconscious prophecy, a wonderful signification of their own.

On the 1st of August 1728, Berkeley was married to Anne Forster, a daughter of the Speaker of the Irish House of Commons—a lady, as he himself says in the quaint phraseology of the time, "whose humour and turn of mind pleases me beyond anything I know in the whole sex." On the 6th of September the pair set sail from Gravesend upon their amazing mission. Mr James and Mr Dalton, two young men of fortune; a Mr Smilert or Smibert, "an ingenious painter;" and a cousin of Mrs Berkeley's, "my Lady Hancock's daughter," made up the little party. Berkeley took with him "a pretty large sum of money of his own property, and a collection of books for the use of his intended library." Thus the wild enterprise was actually carried out with such defiance of prudence and such devotion to a purpose as perhaps no mature man newly married, and with the responsibilities of individual life upon him, ever manifested before. He was now over forty, an unenthusiastic age, and the position which he thus abandoned must have been, both in income and rank, fully up to his highest hopes. Nevertheless the philosopher set sail, America shining before him in a haze of coming splendour, the empire of the future, "Time's noblest offspring." We fear America has proved ungrateful as well in the present advanced state of her history as in the immediate result of Berkeley's mission, and has not added, as she ought, the name of this early and fervid believer in her destiny to her beadroll of saints and heroes.

But the little mission never got to Bermuda. The

party went to Rhode Island, and took up its residence in Newport, a town "containing about six thousand souls, the most thriving, flourishing place in all America for its bigness." In this small community Berkeley found "four sorts of Anabaptists, besides Presbyterians, Quakers, Independents, and many of no profession at all," but all living in tolerable peace and quiet, and all agreed, or politely professing to be so, that the Church of England was the second-best. Here he purchased land and built a farmhouse, meaning to make of his new property a stock farm to supply the future college at Bermuda. But the months passed wearily on, and the first flush of hope wavered, and the promised Government grant, without which nothing could be done, was not forthcoming. Anxious letters, full of increasing care, came from the troubled missionary. Though he threw himself at once into clerical work in his temporary abode, it was work with no satisfaction in it. If this were to be all, he could not but bethink himself that "upon all private accounts I should like Derry better than New England." His friends, wearying too of the quiet of Newport and the suspense, went off to Boston, and upon various expeditions. There his first child was born, and "a great joy" to him. "Among all my delays and disappointments, I thank God," he says, with quaint sobriety, "I have two domestic comforts that are very agreeable, my wife and my little son, both which exceed my expectations, and fully answer all my wishes." But yet notwithstanding

these solaces, even Berkeley's stout heart began to fail. His letters convey the idea to us of a man on a headland straining his eyes out to sea for ships which will not come. The winds blow him chance bits of news in an irregular, half-reliable way. Now it is that one of the men whose co-operation he had hoped for, has been made a bishop at home, which calls from him an impatient sigh of congratulation, "since I doubt we are not likely to see him in this part of the world." Now it is the heart-sickening tidings that a ship has been cast away with letters on board, which probably would have brought consolation. But consolation in the shape of his £20,000, Berkeley was not destined to receive.

His courage, however, did not fail. With his wife only standing by him, and his baby to amuse him, and his ear continually on the strain for such echoes from England as might come across the sea, the indomitable soul set to work again, and produced, by way of occupation to his anxious leisure, the *Minute Philosopher*, a book intended for the refutation of the freethinkers of his time. It was "written in a series of dialogues on the model of Plato," and contained—besides a long strain of close and powerful argument, which of course, in the change which has come over scepticism, as well as other modes of thought, is little better than a fossil at this time—many pleasant quaint indications of the manners of the day, the "dishes of tea," in which even freethinkers seemed to delight, and the little landscapes, quaint

compositions, like the pretty artificial background of one of Stothard's engravings, where they meet the virtuous rustic, and find all their skill and cleverness crumble to nothing before him. Such was the fashion of the age; and nothing can more clearly manifest the difference between that period and our own, than the contrast between the freethinker as set forth by Berkeley, who was himself a man of the world, and knew what he was describing—professed libertine and scoffer, setting pleasure high above virtue, and almost professedly denying God in order to be free of the restraints of His law—and the pious, even pietistic, doubter of our own time, with his high morality and his tender conscience. Berkeley knew of no such refined and wonderful being. His Alciphron and Lysicles are fine gentlemen, "bloods" of the fullest flavour. And yet this is how (being on a visit in the country) they manage their meetings: "As we sat round the tea-table, in a summer parlour which looks into the garden, Alciphron, after the first dish, turned down his cup, and, reclining back in his chair, proceeded as follows——"! How comical are the little changes of manner and custom which a century makes; and how much more than comical, how amazing, the difference in sentiment and thought!

But in the mean time no news or bad news came from England. The money from which the endowment of the Bermuda College was to have come was otherwise appropriated; and Sir Robert Walpole, on being finally appealed to, made answer, that of course

the money would be paid *as soon as suited the public convenience;* but, as a friend, he counselled Dean Berkeley to return home and not to await that far-off contingency. Thus the whole chivalric scheme broke down. Berkeley had wasted four years in the blank existence of the little New England town, had "expended much of his private property," and spent infinite exertions and hopes in vain. A long period before his actual setting-out had been swallowed up in negotiations to obtain this futile charter and unpaid grant. He gave up, on the whole, some seven years of the flower and prime of his life to the scheme thus cruelly and treacherously rendered abortive. It is so that England treats the generous movements and attempted self-devotion of her sons. Had it been a factory or a plantation, there might have been some hope for Berkeley; but a college with only ideal advantages, mere possibilities of influence and evangelisation,—what was that to Walpole, or to the slumbrous prosaic nation over which he ruled? A generation later, indeed, that Utopia in the Summer Islands, had it been planted, might have been of use to England; but there have been few statesmen in our island of more generous temper than that of the Jewish king, who was satisfied that there should be peace in his time. Berkeley returned in 1732 to England, his hopes over, so far as the New World was concerned, his deanery gone in the Old World, his money spent, and the cares of a growing family upon him. Had he but contented himself with pleasant Derry and his

£1100 a-year, as any other philosopher would! But here our Idealist stands alone among philosophers, and in a very small minority even among men. One friend he had who understood and appreciated the man. Queen Caroline, herself advanced from Leicester Fields to the full glory of St James's, lost no time in doing what a queen could do to compensate him for his failure. But even queens in England cannot do everything they will, and it was two years before Berkeley was provided for. At the end of that time he became Bishop of Cloyne, and returned for the remainder of his active life to his native country, henceforward to employ all the powers of his intellect for its advantage, and to spend, in comparative obscurity and unceasing beneficent genial work, the latter half of his days.

Nothing can be more curious, especially at the present moment, than the incidental light thrown upon the Ireland of a century ago by the life of such a man. It would be difficult to conceive anything more unlike the Ireland which plays so large a part in the political world to-day. At that time nobody had so much as begun to think of the rights or wrongs of the nation, though it possessed that highest of supposed advantages—an actual Parliament of its own. We have already said that in Bishop Berkeley's own character there is so much of the traditionary Irishman, that it is difficult to avoid identifying him with the country in which he was born; and yet everything in his biography, as in all contemporary works,

goes to prove how entirely distinct was the native race from the English colony which ruled and represented it. The Irish are not much more to Berkeley than were the Red men whom he had so longed to preach to. They occupied, it would seem, a position not dissimilar. They were savages, to whom a benevolent protecting colonist was kind, teaching them the first principles of social economy, and elementary rules of prudence and self-interest;—and whom a bad colonist was correspondingly hard upon as upon an abject and inferior race. The schemes that were current in the island for introducing manufactures and industries of various descriptions—the great society which distributed flax-seed and lent tools, and coaxed the pitiful barbarian into helping himself, bear all the characteristics which attend the bringing in of civilisation in the savage corners of the earth. Paddy himself, our old witty well-beloved friend, does not seem to have had any existence when Bishop Berkeley wrote the *Querist*, or when Chesterfield set up an anxious and short-lived Vice-Regality at Dublin, and Mr Prior, the "dear Tom" of Berkeley's letters, established his society. At that day he was a wild aboriginal man, no gleam of his natural genius having yet shone through his uncouth guise—as unlike the Paddy brought into knowledge (we suppose) by Miss Edgeworth, as is the factious and irrepressible Irishman of the moment. And certainly, if it were wanted to prove the beneficial action which a Protestant bishop might exercise in such a country, no better example

could be found than that of the Bishop of Cloyne. When thus settled permanently in his own island, Berkeley devoted himself to its interests with all the enthusiasm of his nature. Probably his episcopal work was not very engrossing. The year after his installation in his bishopric the *Querist* was published in Dublin. Its object was a general exposition, not of the wrongs, but of the vices of Ireland, with many practical suggestions for their remedy, one of which was the establishment of a national bank. Industry, cleanliness, content, and that honest work which is in so many cases to the Celt as to the savage rather a curse than a blessing, are what he recommends and urges with perpetual iteration.

"Whether there ever was, is, or will be, an industrious native poor or an idle rich?" is the first question in the *Querist;* and on this he rings the changes with infinite variety and wealth of illustration. "Whether the bulk of our Irish natives are not kept from thriving by that cynical content in dirt and beggary which they possess to a degree beyond any other people in Christendom? Whether the creating of wants be not the likeliest way to produce industry in a people? And whether, if our peasantry were accustomed to eat beef and wear shoes, they would not be more industrious? Whether Ireland alone might not raise hemp sufficient for the British navy? Whether the upper part of this people are not truly English by blood, language, religion, manners, inclination, and interest? Whether we are not as much Englishmen as the children of old Romans born in Britain were still Romans? . . . Whether, if drunkenness be a necessary evil, men may not as well drink the growth of their country? . . . Whether there be upon earth any Christian or civilised people so beggarly, wretched, and destitute as the common Irish? . . . Whether there be any country in Christendom more capable of improvement than

Ireland? Whether my countrymen are not readier at finding excuses than remedies? . . . Whether it be not a new spectacle under the sun to behold in such a climate and such a soil, and under such a gentle Government, so many roads untrodden, fields untilled, houses desolate, and hands unemployed? . . . Whose fault is it if poor Ireland still continues poor?"

This last pregnant question has been handed on to us like so many of the others, and does not seem much nearer a reply now than in Bishop Berkeley's day. But it is curious to see this perennial question approached from the side of national compunction and a desire to mend. To think that neither a national bank, nor the distribution of flax and hemp seed, nor the promotion of manufactures in general, should have brought any cure to the distracted country, would probably have much perplexed the ardent philosopher, thus reasoning with his own people with all the heat and vehemence of an anxiety bordering on despair. Some time later he treated the same subject in a still more remarkable and individual way, addressing, under the title of *A Word to the Wise*, an eloquent remonstrance and exhortation to the Catholic priests of Ireland. Among all the remarkable productions of his genius there is none more remarkable than this. Indeed, Berkeley's fame as a philosopher has but obscured the singular exertions in the most practical of all fields of public labour which would of themselves have distinguished any other man. The way in which he addresses "your reverences," with a dignified respect and full acknowledg-

ment of their influence, has been but too seldom emulated in Ireland. We are told in his biography that the priests returned "their sincere and hearty thanks to the worthy author" in the *Dublin Journal*, "assuring him that they were determined to comply with every particular recommended in his address to the best of their power." The kind of advice thus given by the Protestant bishop, in his acknowledged eminence as at once a sage of the highest reputation and a man experienced in the world, to the homely priests of a country a thousand times poorer and more wretched then than it is now, will be seen from the following extracts:—

"Be not startled, reverend sirs," he begins, "to find yourselves addressed by one of a different communion. We are indeed (to our shame be it spoken) more inclined to hate for those articles wherein we differ, than to love one another for those wherein we agree. But if we cannot extinguish, let us at least suspend our animosities; and, forgetting our religious feuds, consider ourselves in the amiable light of countrymen and neighbours. Why should disputes about faith interrupt the duties of civil life? or the different roads we take to heaven prevent our taking the same steps on earth? Do we not inhabit the same spot of ground, breathe the same air, and live under the same government? Why, then, should we not conspire in one to promote the common good of our country? We are all agreed about the usefulness of meat, drink, and clothes; and, without doubt, we all sincerely wish our poor neighbours were better supplied with them. Providence and nature have done their part: no country is better qualified to furnish the necessaries of life, and yet no people are worse provided. . . . Whether it be from the heaviness of the climate, or from the Spanish and Scythian blood that runs in their veins, or whatever else may be the cause, there still remains in the natives of

this island a remarkable antipathy to labour. You, gentlemen, can alone conquer this innate hereditary sloth. Do you then, as you love your country, exert yourselves.

"The house of an Irish peasant is the cave of poverty—within you see a pot and a little straw; without, a heap of children tumbling on the dunghill. Their fields and gardens are a lively counterpart of Solomon's description in the Proverbs. . . . In every road the ragged ensigns of poverty are displayed. You often meet caravans of poor, whole families in a drove, without clothes to cover or bread to feed them, both which might be easily procured by moderate labour. They are encouraged in this vagabond life by the miserable hospitality they meet with in every cottage, whose inhabitants expect the same kind reception in their turn when they become beggars, begging being the last refuge of these improvident creatures. . . . The Scythians were noted for wandering, and the Spaniards for sloth and pride. Our Irish are behind neither of these nations, from which they descend, in their respective characteristics. 'Better is he that laboureth and aboundeth in all things than he that boasteth himself and wanteth bread,' saith the son of Sirach, but so saith not the Irishman. In my own family, a kitchen-wench refused to carry out cinders because she was descended from an old Irish stock. . . . At the same time, these proud people are more destitute than savages, and more abject than negroes. . . . Having long observed and bewailed this wretched state of my countrymen, and the insufficiency of several methods set on foot to reclaim them, I have recourse to your reverences as the *dernier resort*. . . . Raise your voices, reverend sirs, exert your influence, show your authority over the multitude, by urging them to the practice of an honest industry, a duty necessary to all and required in all, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, whether Christians, Jews, or Pagans. . . . When so many circumstances provoke and animate your people to labour, when their private wants and the necessities of the public, when the laws, the magistrates, and the very country calls upon them, you cannot think it becomes you alone to be silent or hindmost in every project for promoting the public good. Why should you, whose influence is greatest, be the least active? Why

should you, whose words are most likely to prevail, say least in the common cause?

"Perhaps it will be said, the discouragements attending those of your communion are a bar against all endeavours for exciting them to a laudable industry. . . . To this it may be answered that, admitting these considerations do in some measure damp industry and ambition in persons of a certain rank, yet they can be no let to the industry of poor people, or supply an argument against endeavouring to procure meat, drink, and clothes. . . . It will be alleged in excuse for this idleness, that the country-people want encouragement to labour, as not having a property in the lands. There is small encouragement, say you, for them to build or plant upon another's land, wherein they have only a temporary interest. To which I answer, that life itself is but temporary; that all tenures are not of the same kind; that the case of our English and the original Irish is equal in this respect; and that the true aborigines or natural Irish are noted for want of industry in improving even on their own lands, whereof they have both possession and property. . . . A tight house, warm apparel, and wholesome food, are sufficient motives to labour. If all had them we should be a flourishing nation. . . .

"But admitting even, for the various reasons above alleged, that it is impossible for our cottagers to be rich, yet it is certain they may be clean. Now, bring them to be cleanly and your work is half done. A little washing, scrubbing, and rubbing bestowed on their persons and houses, would introduce a sort of industry, and industry in one kind is apt to beget it in another. Indolence in dirt is a terrible symptom, which shows itself in our lower Irish more perhaps than in any people on this side the Cape of Good Hope. I will venture to add, that, look throughout the kingdom, and you shall not find a clean house, inhabited by cleanly people, and yet wanting necessaries. That same spirit of industry that keeps folk clean being sufficient to keep them also in food and raiment. . . .

"If you have any regard (as is not to be doubted) either for the souls or bodies of your people, or even for your own interest or credit, you cannot fail to inveigh against this crying sin of

your country. . . . Were this but done heartily—would you but 'be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort,' such is the ascendant you have gained over the people, that we might soon expect to see the good fruits thereof. . . . It stands upon you to act with vigour in this cause, and shake off the shackles of sloth from your countrymen, the rather because there be some who surmise that yourselves have put them on. Right or wrong, men will be apt to judge of your doctrines by their fruits. It will reflect small honour on their teachers if, instead of honesty and industry, those of your communion are peculiarly distinguished by the contrary qualities, or if the nation converted by the great and glorious St Patrick should, above all other nations, be stigmatised and marked out as good for nothing. . . . Many suspect your religion to be the cause of that notorious idleness which prevails so generally among the natives of this island, as if the Roman Catholic faith was inconsistent with an honest diligence in a man's calling. But whoever considers the great spirit of industry that reigns in Flanders and France, and even beyond the Alps, must acknowledge this to be a groundless suspicion. In Piedmont and Genoa, in the Milanese and the Venetian States, and indeed throughout all Lombardy, how well is the soil cultivated, and what manufactories of silk, velvet, paper, and other commodities flourish! . . . To which I might add, that the person whose authority will be of the greatest weight with you, even the Pope himself, is at this day endeavouring to put new life into the trade and manufactures of his country. Though I am in no secret of the Court of Rome, yet I will venture to affirm, that neither Pope nor Cardinals will be pleased to hear that those of their communion are distinguished above all others by sloth, dirt, and beggary; or be displeased at your endeavouring to rescue them from the reproach of such an infamous distinction."

It is unnecessary to apologise for quoting so largely from this extraordinary appeal at a moment when Ireland and its affairs are again in the ascendant, and when so graphic a picture of its condition a hundred

years ago, and the relations then existing between the priesthood and people, is thus presented before us. The Bishop dwells upon these relations with the most unhesitating distinctness. He has no doubt of the power of "your reverences" to effect what reformation they please in the race so dutifully subject to them. Perhaps so strange an address was never written by a dignified ecclesiastic in one Church to the priesthood of another. Its candour and honesty and generous meaning seem, if we may trust the biographer of Berkeley, to have been understood and appreciated by the body to whom it was addressed. They are said to have acknowledged in the *Dublin Journal* before mentioned that "in every page it contained a proof of the author's extensive charity; his views are only towards the public good; the means he provideth are easily complied with; and his manner of treating persons in their circumstances so very singular, that they plainly show the good man, the polite gentleman, and the true patriot." How far these sentiments came from the heart it is of course impossible to tell, or whether there might not be some among their reverences who found the heretic Bishop's advice impertinent and uncalled for; but nevertheless there it is, as curious a memorial of the age and the man as could well be found.

Notwithstanding Berkeley's philosophical understanding, his liberal mind and friendly ways of thinking, and experience of the world, it is evident that he looked upon the penal laws respecting Roman Catho-

lics as a matter of course, unalterable, and founded on everlasting justice; just as he speaks with imperturbable calm, and not the slightest appearance even of a doubt as to the righteousness of the arrangement, about the slaves in the plantations. These simplest rules of natural justice did not, it is evident, in the smallest degree affect a mind so open, so generous, so full of regard for his fellow-creatures. This is one of the mysteries of humanity which it is the most hard to elucidate. We are far from taking up the extreme side of those great questions, or of going wild, for instance, with rapture over that most doubtful and insoluble problem of negro emancipation, the practical difficulties of which are immense. As a question of expediency or even possibility, it is perhaps as far from solution as ever it was; but in theory there no longer remains a doubt on the subject. This, however, it is clear, had never entered Berkeley's mind. A hundred years is no such great matter in the world's history; but all the material changes that have been effected since then reckon small enough in comparison with the revolution which has been wrought in all our estimates of things and modes of thought. Berkeley takes slavery for granted with the utmost calm, just as he takes it for granted that it is in the natural order of things that a priesthood, to whose influence he appeals as supreme over a whole nation, should be "obnoxious to the laws," and the communion in general lie under the "discouragements" to which he alludes so placidly. And

yet he could not take for granted the existence of a stool or a table! What are our vulgar novelties of gas and penny-post, and the rest of our modern stock-in-trade, in comparison with the extraordinary revolution of ideas which has placed, in this respect at least, by mere dint of time, the mass of men who never think at all, on a height unattainable by one of the greatest thinkers and best men of his age!

The last great public undertaking of Bishop Berkeley's life has a whimsical aspect, which in fact it derives (according to the strictest rules of his own philosophy) from our eyes alone, being in its nature and effect upon the time a very serious matter of the gravest importance to the world. This was the discovery and promulgation of tar-water—grand sovereign panacea for every evil under heaven. The curious enthusiasm of the man's nature, and scorn of all secondary restraints—such as the fear of ridicule, or the blame which attends interference with the business of others—comes out most distinctly in the fervour and persistence with which he thrusts his nauseous draught down the world's throat. It cured himself, he tells us, of "a nervous cholic" which "rendered his life a burden to him;" upon which he began, with his natural energy and hopefulness, to try it upon his neighbours; and having worked a variety of cures in Cloyne, immediately judged it his duty to make known the marvel to his country and mankind in general. He addressed himself to this subject characteristically in a work entitled *Siris: A*

Chain of Philosophical Reflections and Inquiries concerning the Virtues of Tar-water. "We are now mad about tar-water," says Horace Walpole, "on the publication of a book written by Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. The book contains every subject from tar-water to the Trinity; however, all the world read it, and understand no more than they would if it were intelligible." The description has a sneer in it, but yet is not far from the truth. *Siris* begins with the most plain and practical directions for the making of the panacea, and as many details of cures as Morison or Mr Holloway could desire; from a colic to an inflammation—gout, ague, pleurisy, asthma, everything from which man suffers, had been cured by this wonderful agent; and from this very solid beginning our philosopher goes off, not fantastically, but by slow degrees, by means of the structure of plants, their anatomy and constituent elements, up to the deepest speculations of the ancient philosophy, and the nature of the Godhead itself. "It is indeed a chain," says his admiring biographer, "which, like that of the poet, reaches from earth to heaven, conducting the reader by an almost imperceptible gradation from the phenomena of tar-water, through the depths of the ancient philosophy, to the sublimest mystery of the Christian religion." This curious work is one of Berkeley's longest productions, and contains a very quaint mixture of the practical with the most ethereal ideal qualities. It came speedily to a second edition, a happiness which does not seem to have befallen any

of his former works, and must have produced an overwhelming sensation throughout the country. The philosophical system of Idealism did not do half so much to make the Bishop of Cloyne famous as this treatise, and the invention which gave it birth.

"A man came into an apothecary's shop the other day," says Horace Walpole in the year 1744. "'Do you sell tar-water?' 'Tar-water!' replied the apothecary, 'why, I sell nothing else!'" So swift and so universal was the popularity of the new remedy. If it derived anything of its reputation from the quaint and elaborate argument by which the author traced its beneficial stream through the veins of the odorous pines, from their subtle connection with the vital flame which gives existence to the entire world, it would be creditable to the genius of the age; probably, however, as Horace says, the world understood it as little as if it had been intelligible; but the public understood and appreciated the cases, of which its reverend inventor gave the fullest supply. Two other shorter works on the same subject—pamphlets once more addressed to "dear Tom"—followed up the impression. Ireland, not to say Great Britain, going mildly out of their senses, did nothing but swallow the hateful draught. So long indeed had the idea lasted, that the writer has heard from an old lady, still living and enjoying life, an awful tale of the miseries of a houseful of Irish children, who were condemned to begin life daily with a cup-

ful of tar-water, as late as the beginning of the present century.

This was Berkeley's last work. He was by this time growing old, and beginning, as the springs of life failed him, to grow weary of his retirement in the utter seclusion of Cloyne, which he had only left once since his appointment. Nothing can be more pleasant than the glimpses we have in his letters of the tranquil life he led in his episcopal hermitage. The palace, or, as his biographer modestly calls it, the "manse-house" of the little diocese, seems to have been a home of all the arts. Three boys, of whom the parents could not at first decide "which was prettiest," and one daughter, grew up round him in that peaceful place. The village, for it was nothing better, had few resources, but these were cultivated with a steady adherence to principle, such as few theorists attempt. The Bishop "chose to wear ill clothes and worse wigs, rather than suffer the poor of the town to remain unemployed"—a piece of self-denial which no doubt was felt by the handsome ecclesiastic even when age took from him something of his characteristic vivacity. Offers of better preferment were made to him more than once, which he declined. He "did not see," he says, "all things considered, the glory of wearing the name of primate in these days, or of getting so much money, a thing every tradesman in London may get if he pleases." Visitors went and came to the manse-house, but not in such numbers as would have satisfied the Bishop's

genial hospitality. He writes letters to his friends who had accompanied him to America with a friendly warmth, bidding them to visit him, describing the myrtles in his garden, and the advantages of his neighbourhood. "Agreeably to the warmth of his temper, he had conceived so high an idea of the beauties of Cloyne," his biographer tells us, "that Mr Pope had once almost determined to make a visit to Ireland on purpose to see the place, which his friend had painted to him with such brilliancy of colouring, and which yet to common eyes presents nothing that is very worthy of attention."

Within, the manse-house must have been a pleasant home. The Bishop declined to buy the *Causes Célèbres* because he apprehended "there might be some among them of too delicate a nature to be read by boys and girls, to whom my library, and particularly all French books, are open." At one time painting is the favourite art, in which he thinks his wife "shows a most uncommon genius; though," he adds, "others may be supposed to judge more impartially than I." At another time it is music that is in the ascendant, and Berkeley's letters are full of bass-viols and Italian psalms. "My wife, I am told, is this day inferior to no singer in the kingdom," he says with that kindly exaltation of his own which is characteristic of such a genial and buoyant nature. It is evident that to make the first break in the family was a thing which the kind father, now growing old, regarded with alarm. When his second boy was old enough

for the university, a plan which the parents had been cherishing for some time, and which Berkeley preferred to the glories of the primacy, was put into execution. He removed with his wife and family to Oxford. "He had taken a fixed resolution," says his biographer, "to spend the remainder of his days in that city, with a view of indulging the passion for a learned retirement which had ever strongly possessed his mind." But young George no doubt had as much to do with it, for Cloyne, after all, was more of a retirement than Oxford. With his usual high-minded sense of justice, he requested leave to resign his bishopric on making this change. "So uncommon a petition excited his Majesty's curiosity to inquire who was the extraordinary man who made it; being told it was his old acquaintance Dr Berkeley, he declared that he should die a bishop in spite of himself, but gave him full liberty to reside where he pleased." It would seem that his actual pastoral work was not the thing which Berkeley himself felt most indispensable to his diocese. He appropriated two hundred a-year to the poor of his neighbourhood, as a substitute for his presence among them until he returned, and so went his way, contented to spend in ease and learned intercourse the evening of his days.

But that evening was destined to be a very short one. Six months after his arrival in Oxford, the family were together on a peaceful Sunday night. The father lay on a sofa in the repose of his old age; the mother, who had been to him more than he ex-

pected and all he desired, and whose accomplishments he admired with so much tender simplicity, was reading aloud to the little household party a sermon of Dr Sherlock's. Calmest domestic scene, the soft and silent happiness of sober English imaginations, upon which it must have looked so unlikely that any sudden terror could fall. His young daughter going to him with "a dish of tea" was the first to see what had happened. He had left them while the reading went on, while the tea sent up its fragrant fumes—and was gone unalterably beyond all sound or call.

So ended a life which has few equals either in the ranks of philosophers or ecclesiastics; a more generous, a more frank and brave and candid spirit never stepped on English soil. His story has dropped from common knowledge, and only his philosophy remains—a philosophy in which the ordinary mind must always see a touch of absurdity. Yet (philosophically), as we have seen, there was nothing absurd in it, and the theory was irrefutable; while no one who has regarded the grand conception of a world so living in God, will refuse to allow to the system the credit of the highest beauty. It agrees with everything in his own harmonious nature, and with all the principles that swayed his life. Never philosopher before him in modern story had been more than inoffensive to his fellow-creatures. Berkeley breathed out of him help, kindness, counsel, and aid to everything round him. Honesty that reached the magnanimous point, and that generous sympathy

with his race which brings a man within reach of the glorious stigma of Quixotism, were the characteristics of the Idealist. Philosophy may or may not be the hopeless science which it is represented by one of its ablest historians; but such a man as Berkeley gives vital force to a generation. Knowledge may fail though it is everlasting; Man, the creature of a day, is the only thing in earth which lives for ever.

X

THE NOVELIST

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OF all the many branches in which literature flourishes, there is none which has been so widely and universally developed in our own generation as that of fiction. We are informed on all sides that we have made immense progress in positive knowledge of every description; but we can see for ourselves the astounding progress which has been made in that special track of art, which demands, some people think, the minimum of knowledge, cultivation, or training. It has come to be a common doctrine that everybody can write a novel, just as it used to be that everybody, or rather anybody, might keep a school; and in point of fact, nowadays most people do write novels, with a result which can scarcely be called satisfactory. The art is as old as human nature; and yet it is not so old in its present shape but that we can identify the fountain from which so many springs have flowed. The similitude is one too energetic, too violent, however, for the subject.

The modern English novel, which is in everybody's hands nowadays; which gives employment to crowds of workpeople, almost qualifying itself to rank among the great industries of the day; which keeps paper-mills going, and printing-machines, and has its own army of dependants and retainers, as if it were cotton or capital,—the English novel, we say, arose, not with any gush, as from a fountain, but in a certain serene pellucid pool, where a group of pretty smiling eighteenth-century faces, with elaborate "heads," and powder and patches, were wont to mirror themselves in the middle of George II.'s reign; while Pope was singing his melodious couplets, and Chesterfield writing his wonderful letters, and Anson fighting with the winds and seas, and Prince Charlie planning the '45. From all the confused events of which the world was full—bewildering destruction of the old, still more bewildering formation of the new—the spectator turns aside into the quaintest homely quiet, the most domestic, least emotional, of all household scenes: and there finds Samuel Richardson, a good printer, a comfortable, affectionate, fatherly tradesman, kind to everybody about him, and very much applauded by his admiring friends, but with no special marks of genius that any one can see. Other men of far greater personal note breathed the same air with this active, pottering, and virtuous bourgeois; men with good blood in their veins, and gold lace on their coats, and Greek and Latin at their fingers' end, not to speak of youth, and vivacity, and high spirits, and

knowledge of the world. There was Henry Fielding, for instance, writing bad plays, and painfully casting about what to do with his genius. What was he to do with it? having at the same time an ailing wife and little children, burdens which Pegasus can take lightly *en croupe*, when he is aware what he is about, and has his course clear before him, but terrible drawbacks to the stumbling steed which is seeking a path for itself across the untrodden ways. It is impossible to give any sketch of one of the two great novelists of the age without introducing the other. Fielding has a thousand advantages to start with over our homely forefather. He is so genial, so jovial, such a fine gentleman; so high an impulse of life and current of spirit run through his books. His wickednesses are not wicked, but mere accidents—warmth of blood and rapidity of movement carrying him away. And then his knowledge of the world! Richardson's knowledge was only of good sort of people, and secondary *litterateurs*, and—women, who are not the world, as everybody knows. This curious distinction of what is life and what is not, which has prevailed so widely since then, probably originated in the eighteenth century. Observers of the present day might be tempted, in the spirit of an age which inquires into everything, to ask why Covent Garden should teach knowledge of the world more effectually than Salisbury Court, and whether players and debauchees throw more light upon the workings of human nature than honest and reasonable souls—

but this is so entirely taken for granted by critics, that it would be vain to make any stand against so all-prevailing a theory; though the question is one which will suggest itself now and then to the unprejudiced. But, notwithstanding the superior knowledge of the world, which gave Fielding an advantage over Richardson—notwithstanding his better acquaintance with polite society, and immensely greater spring and impulse of genius—it was the old printer, and not the young man of the world, who found out the mode of employing his gift. The path once opened was soon filled with many passengers; but to Richardson must be given the credit of having directed the stream towards it and opened the way.

Richardson's personal history is of a kind unique in literature. He had lived half a century in the commonplace world before any one suspected him of the possession of genius. Ordinary duties, commonplace labour, had filled up his fifty years. He had gone through what it was natural to suppose would be the hardest affliction of a man conscious of an original gift of his own, the printing and publication of much rubbish of other people's, with the greatest patience, and had, to all appearance, occupied himself with his own life without any thought of reproducing its mysteries for the edification of others. He had been respectable and helpful and friendly from his cradle. One of Fielding's biographers declares contemptuously that Richardson "had never known the want of a guinea, or committed an act

which the most rigid moralist could censure." It seems the worst accusation that could be brought against him. Neither man nor maid could lay their scath to him. He was a little fussy, a little particular, more than a little vain, but only with that simple vanity which is fed by domestic incense. None of those irregularities which are supposed to belong to genius, existed in this homely man. He was diligent in business, plodding even, to all appearance, with a quick eye for his interest, and a soul capable of the most tradesmanlike punctuality and industry. He paid his way, built houses and barns, wrote and spoke a great deal of good-humoured twaddle, and had not one spark of the light which so often leads astray in his commonplace countenance. And yet, strangely enough, when the late blossom came, it was not a humble specimen of a class already known, but something entirely new and original. Had the world been aware that a new development of art was about to come into being, and that it lay between Richardson and Fielding to produce it, who could have for a moment hesitated as to which should be the founder of the new school? The one had every possible stimulus to spur him on; the other no inducement at all, except the promptings of that half-vain, half-benevolent impulse to benefit others which has indeed produced much print but little literature. The triumph of the old fogey over the splendid young adventurer is complete in every particular. It may be said that Richardson did not mean it, but that

in no way detracts from the glory of his originality. Shakespeare probably did not mean it either. While the young man, torn with a thousand cares, tried ineffectual hackneyed ways of working, such as every needy wit resorted to—poor comedies in the taste of the day, inferior even to the previously exciting rubbish, and utterly unworthy of his own powers—the humdrum old printer glided calmly into the undiscovered path which was to bring fame to both of them. Very seldom is it in this world that the old fogey triumphs. Youth gets the better of him at every turn. Even when he is a hero, with a fine past behind him, he is thrust into a corner to leave room for his grandson, while yet the springs of life are undiminished. We all allow, with a certain fond adoration, that nothing is too good for youth, and enjoy it over again in our children, or cling to it frantically in our own persons, as circumstances or temperament ordain, with the strangest pathetic superstition. It has the cream of everything—health and favour, and success and congratulation. But once in a way, when fifty beats five-and-twenty, may not the rest of us be allowed the unusual luxury of a cheer?

Richardson was born in 1689, in Derbyshire. "My father," he says, "was a very honest man, descended of a family of middling note. My mother was also a good woman, of a family not ungenteel." These mild protestations of gentility, however, do not seem

to have moved the good man farther. He makes no attempt to envelop his progenitors in fictitious dignity as Pope did, but acknowledges the tradesmanship of his immediate connections. It was intended that he should be brought up to the Church—a phrase which bore a very different meaning in those days and in our own. Had the intention been carried out, Richardson probably would have become one of the poor curates who are revealed to us in his own, and more distinctly in Fielding's, works—good men, who took a horn of ale in the kitchen, whose chief means of communicating with the squire or his lady was through "the waiting gentlewoman," herself a curate's daughter. That he had "only common school learning," and at fifteen chose a business, was no doubt a great deal better for Samuel, as well as for his future readers. He describes himself as being "not fond of play," and of being called Serious and Gravity by the other boys, who, however, sought his society as a teller of stories, some of which were from his memory, but others, "of which they would be most fond, and often were affected by them," of his own invention. "All my stories carried with them, I am bold to say, a useful moral," says the virtuous romancer. And we may be sure they did; for whatever may be the objection of the precocious modern child to an over-demonstrative moral, there can be no doubt that stern poetic justice, and the most rigid awards of morality, are always most congenial to the primitive intelli-

gence. It was not only schoolboys, however, who benefited by his moralities. The following incident shows the lad in a more curious light:—

"From my earliest youth I had a love of letter-writing. I was not eleven years old when I wrote, spontaneously, a letter to a widow of near fifty, who, pretending to a zeal for religion, and being a constant frequenter of church ordinances, was continually fomenting quarrels and disturbances, by back-biting and scandal, among all her acquaintance. I collected from the Scripture texts that made against her. Assuming the style and address of a person in years, I exhorted her, I expostulated with her. But my handwriting was known. I was challenged with it, and owned the boldness; for she complained of it to my mother with tears. My mother chid me for the freedom taken by such a boy with a woman of her years; but knowing that her son was not of a pert or forward nature, but, on the contrary, shy and bashful, she commended my principles, though she censured the liberty taken."

A certain delicious air of self-satisfaction in this narrative shows plainly enough that the mature moralist, in the height of his fame, approved, and was on the whole somewhat proud, of these doings of the baby prig. The little monster, we believe, might even now be matched in here and there a virtuous Low-Church household. The reader will recollect a set of American novels, much *repandu* some fifteen or twenty years ago, in which the creature flourishes, and is not "chid" but adored for its pious impudence. Pleasanter incidents, however, are in the life of this droll little precocious adviser and sage. It is clear that he was born with an old head upon his young shoulders, and his success was great among women

—a "success" of a character curiously out of tune with the manners of the time, and at which critics, born conservators of the sneers of all the ages, continue to jeer, notwithstanding that the cycle has run round again, and a Platonic counsellor of womankind has once more become a favourite character in life and fiction. Here is a companion picture of a much more agreeable kind:—

"As a bashful and not forward boy, I was an early favourite with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighbourhood. Half-a-dozen of them, when met to work with their needles, used, when they got a book they liked, and thought I should, to borrow me to read to them, their mothers sometimes with them, and both mothers and daughters used to be pleased with the observations they put me upon making.

"I was not more than thirteen, when three of these young women, unknown to each other, having an high opinion of my taciturnity, revealed to me their love-secrets, in order to induce me to give them copies to write after, or correct, for answers to their lovers' letters; nor did any one of them ever know that I was the secretary to the others. I have been directed to chide, and even repulse, when an offence was either taken or given, at the very time that the heart of the chider or repulser was open before me, overflowing with esteem and affection, and the fair repulser, dreading to be taken at her word, directing *this* word, or *that* expression, to be softened or changed. One, highly gratified with her lover's fervour and vows of everlasting love, has said, when I have asked her direction, 'I cannot tell you what to write; but' (her heart on her lips) 'you cannot write too kindly;' all her fear was only that she should incur slight for her kindness."

Never was a more distinct foreshadowing of the life to come. The quaint urchin, in his little coat and breeches, a wise little undergrown old man,

making his comments with the infinite complacency of precocious childhood, keeping the young women's secrets, knitting his soft brows over the composition of their love-letters, ready, no doubt, to go to the stake rather than betray one of his confiding friends, is a picture full of humour and a pleasant sentiment. If it were not that it is the fashion to sneer at Richardson, one would say, indeed, that there could scarcely be a prettier picture. It is not, of course, the ordinary ideal of a boy of thirteen; but yet it is indisputable that there is a kind of man for whom, from his childhood, the society and confidence of women has an irresistible charm, and that such a man is by no means of necessity a milksop, as society in general is good enough to suppose. This character, it is evident, showed itself in the future novelist at the earliest possible period, and as his life developed it made itself more and more apparent. There are many causes which strengthen such a tendency when it exists in the mind of a man in Richardson's position. He was without education, and yet striving for the best results of education, if we may venture on such an expression. Books, and discussions about books, and that heavenly art of conversation which every intelligent inexperienced being expects to find in society, were to this lowly lad the greatest things on earth. And where was he to attain any semblance of these delightful discussions—that feast of reason and flow of soul of which he dreamt—except among women? Women are very badly

educated, everybody says, and everybody has said it from the remotest antiquity,—and it is very wrong indeed that such a state of affairs should continue to go on as it has gone for several thousand years; and therefore it is most right and just to institute ladies' colleges, and courses of lectures, and university examinations. But yet the fact is that, so far as talk is concerned, the sisters of the boy upon whom we are spending heaps of money at Eton and Oxford, are not only much pleasanter to talk to, but very much more ready and better qualified in many instances to take a part in those mild intellectual encounters, those little incursions over the borders of metaphysics, discussions of motives, sentiments, cases of conscience, points of social honour, which are the most prolific subjects of conversation, than—not only their brother, but their brother's tutor, and all the learned community to which he belongs. Mr Helps, in his *Friends in Council*, and all the remote descendants of that popular work, reduces his feminine interlocutors to a very small share in the talk; but had the talk been real, the chances are it would have been they, and not Ellesmere or Milverton, who had the lion's share. Among themselves, women continually discuss such subjects. And so long as there remains a prejudice in favour of Shakespeare and the musical glasses as subjects of refined conversation, men in Richardson's position, painfully climbing the social ladder, will always find their best aids in the help and guidance of women. Had the young novelist attempted to

read or elicit any sympathy about his books from the boors in the village ale-house, what a downfall would his have been! But their sisters in the mantua-maker's parlour responded by nature to any fine sentiment or case of delicate distress. It was no doubt of as much importance to Richardson that he thus came in contact with the young women and their love-letters, instead of the village wits in the ale-house, as it is of importance to a freshman at Oxford to begin his course under the auspices of a good or a bad "set."

In the year 1706, Richardson began his active life as apprentice to a printer. "He thought it would gratify his thirst for reading," says Mrs Barbauld; an interpretation of the motives of a "devil" which ought to make authors in general benevolent towards the imp. But the young printer did not find the facilities he had hoped for. His master naturally wanted him to work and not to read; and he had to steal from sleep and amusement the time which he felt himself bound to devote to the improvement of his mind. He "engaged in a correspondence with a gentleman greatly my superior in degree, and of ample fortune, who, had he lived, intended high things for me," he informs us. Who this mythical personage was, or how the 'prentice lad became acquainted with him, no information is given. But "multitudes of letters," says Richardson, "passed between this gentleman and me. He wrote well—was a master of the epistolary style. Our subjects were various; but his letters were mostly narrative, giving me an

account of his proceedings and what befell him in the different nations through which he travelled." This romantic episode of his youth, which looks very much as if it might belong to the fabulous era which occurs in most men's history, was terminated by the early death of "the gentleman," and henceforward nothing but sober prose occurs in the narrative. Richardson served out his apprenticeship, worked five or six years as a compositor, and finally set up for himself in a court in Fleet Street. He must have been a man of about thirty when he thus ventured to try his individual fortune. Everything had evidently gone with him in the soberest, most methodical way. No exaggerated good-luck nor superlative energy had been his. A few years later he became the publisher of the *True Briton*, one of the factious newspapers of the time; and subsequently two or three other papers passed through his hands. Like a true London 'prentice, he married his master's daughter—a step which no doubt promoted his modest fortunes; and on her death, married again the daughter of a bookseller at Bath—keeping his affections strictly within the trade. An acquaintance with the Speaker of the House of Commons, Mr Onslow, procured him the printing of the Journals of the House, in twenty-six folio volumes: a work in which there was apparently more honour than profit, since he complains to one of his correspondents that he had never yet had payment, "no, not to the value of a shilling, though the debt is upwards of three thousand pounds." But it is

clear that the man who could be the nation's creditor to the extent of three thousand pounds must have thriven in his affairs. He had a large family of sons and daughters, most of whom he lost in infancy—a house in the country near Hammersmith—and all the comforts of a well-to-do and thriving citizen. In this pleasant unexciting routine of busy life, working hard early and late, yet taking his leisure and seeing his friends, fifty years of Richardson's life were spent. He had his trials and his joys like the rest of us; but nothing occurred to distinguish him from any other printer in the trade, except, perhaps, a knack he had of compiling indices, writing prefaces, and doing other humble necessary accidental jobs in the launching of a book into the world. This knack, towards the year 1740, suggested to some enterprising publishers the idea of a homely little work, such as might be "useful" to the ignorant. The account of this suggestion, however, had better be given in Richardson's own words:—

"Two booksellers, my particular friends, entreated me to write for them a little volume of letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves. 'Will it be any harm,' said I, 'in a piece you want to be written so low, if we should instruct them how they should think and act in common cases, as well as indite?' They were the more urgent with me to begin the little volume from this hint. I set about it, and in the progress of it, writing two or three letters to instruct handsome girls, who were obliged to go out to service, as we phrase it, how to avoid the snares that might be laid against their virtue, the above story (one of structure somewhat similar to that of *Pamela*) recurred to my thoughts."

From this slight origin sprang a whole world of literary efforts, and some of the most notable books in the English language. Nothing can be more characteristic of the man who no more suspected himself of possessing that strange light of genius within his humdrum individuality than the world did. What the fatherly good soul meant was to assume in print the *rôle* which he had evidently come to by nature in the ordinary intercourse of life. He had daughters of his own, and preferred —"I do not blush," he says "to confess it"—the society of women; and what more just than that, when the pen was thus put into his hand, he should employ it in warning young women against those snares of which the world was full? In the simplest good faith the *bonhomme* began his homely labours. There is no touch of inspiration, no thrill of poetic frenzy, about the matter. A little pleasant natural complacency, something of that unctuous amiability which characterises the giver of good advice, a little fuss, excitement, and flutter of interest in the dutiful feminine household. Thus *Pamela* came into the world. Richardson was over fifty by this time. He had all the settled habits of a punctual tradesman, and of a man early married and long habituated to the calm yoke of domestic life. His first critics were his wife and a young lady visitor, who "used to come to my little closet every night with, 'Have you any more of *Pamela*, Mr R.?—we are come to have a little more of *Pamela*.' This encouraged me to pro-

secute it," says the unconscious novelist. But so little was he aware of any special merit in his work, that "I had not the courage," he tells his friend Aaron Hill, "to send the two volumes to your ladies, until I found the books well received by the public." "I had no leisure," he adds, to another correspondent, "nor knew I that I had so much invention, till I almost accidentally slid into the writing of *Pamela*. And besides, little did I imagine that anything I could write would be so kindly received as my writings have been by the world."

The story is sufficiently well known to want little description; and at the same time it is so completely contrary to the taste of the present age, that it is with difficulty that we can comprehend the wild plaudits with which it seems to have been received. That young women should be taught to guard their "virtue," and yet that the brutal squire who permitted himself all kinds of attempts upon it was, after all, not such an offender but that he might be pardoned when his "intentions" became "honourable," and married and made very happy ever after, is the astounding sentiment of the eighteenth century as expressed in *Pamela*. Those letters which the virtuous papa, in all the domestic purity of his slippers and his closet, read to his "worthy-hearted wife" and her young lady friend, and which were written with the intention of turning "young people into a course of reading . . . which might tend to promote the cause of religion and virtue," abound

in nauseous details as explicit as the frankest of French novels. To be sure, Pamela is spotless; and there is no dangerous seduction of sentiment to confound the reader's sense of right and wrong; but it does not seem to occur to the author that his heroine's delicacy of mind is in the slightest degree impaired by the assaults made upon her, or that the coarse contest is anything but a sublime trial and victory of feminine purity. Such, there is no doubt, was to a great extent the sentiment of the age. "Why is old Lady So-and-So's staff like *Pamela?*" said a pretty wit, in her patches and powder. "Because it is the prop of virtue!" Perhaps we are not so much better in reality as we think ourselves—for is not the sensation novel a resurrection of nastiness? —but yet we have advanced a little in our ideal of virtue and its props. No doubts on the subject, however, seem to have troubled the satisfaction of *Pamela's* original audience. The book was published anonymously in the year 1740. "It was received," says Mrs Barbauld, "with a burst of applause from all ranks of people." Its tendency was considered so excellent that popular divines recommended it from the pulpit. Ladies at Ranelagh, in the height of gaiety and fashion, held up the slim volumes to each other "to show they had got the book that every one was talking of." "Mr Pope says it will do more good than many volumes of sermons. I have heard them (Pope and Allen) very high in its praises, and they will not have any faults to be men-

tioned in the story. I believe they have read it twice apiece at least," says Richardson's brother-in-law. "Mr Chetwynd says," adds the same authority, "that if all other books were to be burnt, this book, next to the Bible, ought to be preserved." Other enthusiastic contemporaries declare it to be "the best book ever published."

"I opened this powerful little piece," says Aaron Hill, while still unaware, or affecting to be unaware, of its authorship, "with more expectation than from common designs of like promise, because it came from your hands for my daughters; yet who could have dreamed he would find, under the modest disguise of a novel, all the soul of religion, good-breeding, discretion, good-nature, wit, fancy, fine thoughts, and morality? . . . It will live on through posterity with such unbounded extent of good consequences that twenty ages to come may be the better and wiser for its influence."

Such was the reception afforded to a book which nowadays we should consider of very doubtful tendency, and upon which the most enthusiastic admirer would certainly never think of bringing up his son to virtue, as one of Richardson's admirers proposes. A still greater compliment was in reserve for it. Fielding, with a curious mixture of contempt and imitation, wrote his *Joseph Andrews* avowedly as a parody upon, and trenchant satire of, the Waiting Gentlewoman, who had carried her purity to so good a market. The state of feeling which could permit such a proceeding is happily incomprehensible to ourselves. It is said the two men had been on good terms before, though there never could have been much friendship, one would imagine, between the struggling playwright

afloat amid all the dissipations of town, the ruined squire, with the best of blood in his veins but not a shilling in his pocket—and the orderly sober citizen, warm and well to do, whose virtues and failings were alike respectable. Nobody except Richardson himself, who felt it deeply, seems to have considered that there was anything derogatory to the dignity of genius in this curious parody and adaptation. The spiteful meaning has all evaporated by process of time; and perhaps the highest claim of *Pamela* to consideration now is, that it was the occasion of producing another work of quality much less mortal than itself. Fielding pays the *kain* or toll to the devil—which seems to have been exacted from that age, as it was from the medieval artificers, who built bridges and founded cities by the help of the Evil One—with a certain jovial readiness. But disgusting as are his preliminary chapters, we are not sure that they are really worse than Pamela's elaborate defence and detailed account of her various dangers; and Richardson has nothing which can compare with the conception of Parson Adams. That wonderful, simple, patriarchal, wise, and innocent and foolish priest—with his learning and his absence of mind, his tender heart, his spotless character, his sympathy and severity—is one of the first and finest figures in that gallery of worthies which has since expanded so widely. He stands between Sir Roger de Coverley and Uncle Toby, one of those matchless pictures, made with a smile on the lip and a tear in the eye,

which enrich English literature. And there are few greater marvels in literary history than the fact that such a conception was brought into the world, in the first place, by a rival's spiteful impatience of public approbation as shown to the author of the pioneer story—the novel which had sounded the waters, and made the chart, and opened the dangerous yet triumphant way. Thanks to that alchemy of genius which works the base alloy out of the gold unawares, and defeats even its own evil motives when once its splendid activity is fully got to work, Fielding's book, which began in malice and filthiness, rapidly cleared into a real masterpiece of art. A greater compliment could not have been paid to Pamela. It is the grand distinction of that pretty, voluminous, simple, and prudent maiden.

The story was translated almost immediately into French and *Dutch*—that language, now so unknown, being then the familiar tongue of our closest allies. And it produced for Richardson a crowd of correspondents, and fame which was entirely beyond his expectations. A spurious continuation, called *Pamela in High Life*, was published shortly after, and led the author to give forth two additional volumes, which, however, have fallen into utter oblivion. Warburton advised him, in his own name and that of Pope, to "make it a vehicle for satire upon the fashions and follies of the Great World, by representing the light in which they would appear to the rustic Pamela when she was introduced to them." But satire was

not Richardson's *forte;* and the continuation of Pamela is as dead as any of the other secondary novels of the day.

After this curious blaze of sudden excitement and success, quiet fell once more upon the printing-office, with the printer's house over it, in Salisbury Court, and over the pleasanter home at Hammersmith. The good tradesman went back to his business; he opened his house hospitably to his intimates; he wrote his little letters, full of a soft purr of satisfaction and content. He was pleased with himself, pleased with his friends, and perhaps felt that the world itself could scarcely be so wicked, since *Pamela* had so lively a reception in it. The kindly simple heart of the man is very well expressed in his letters, notwithstanding this purring of complacency. When he hears that one of his friends has an unwholesome residence, and is subject to perpetual illness in it, he puts his own country house immediately at that friend's disposal. He sends the young ladies copies of *Pamela*, and toy-books for the children. With a softer instinct still he consoles a dissatisfied poet over the apparent failure of his works. "Your writings require thought to read and to take in their whole force, and the world has no thought to bestow. I do not think," he adds, as so many benevolent critics have said with the same object, "that, were Milton's *Paradise Lost* to be now published as a new work, it would be well received. Shakespeare, with all his beauties, would, as a modern writer, be hissed off

the stage." Everything he says is full of the same good-nature and bland patriarchal kindness. Success evidently had nothing but a softening effect upon him. The only touch of bitterness in all the six, not overlively, volumes of his correspondence is directed against Fielding, of whom he speaks with a certain acrid offence which is quite comprehensible, to say the least.

In this quietness, his biographer tells us, eight years were passed without any further appeal to popular sympathy and admiration. But the interval was not one of idleness. Within a year or two of his first publication the plan of *Clarissa* seems to have so far ripened in his mind that his correspondents were informed of it. In 1744 he informs Dr Young (of the *Night Thoughts*) that "I have not gone so far as I thought to have done by this time; and then the unexpected success which attended the other thing," he adds, "instead of encouraging me, has made me more diffident. And I have run to such an egregious length, and am such a sorry pruner, though greatly luxuriant, that I am apt to add three pages for one I take away! Altogether I am frequently out of conceit with it." But still the work went on. It gave all his friends a subject to write about, and added a zest to his homely life. During those tranquil passing years, which seem to go like so many days (the time of the '45, when Scotland was being rent in sunder, and Charles Edward going through his martyrdom, and the Scots lords being

beheaded and quartered almost under the eyes of our placid novelist!) Richardson, in his snug closet, after his day's work, went on slowly elaborating his story. Some parts of it appear to have been sent before publication for the criticism of his friends at a distance; and it was regularly read and submitted to the judgment of his home circle, which included a varying number of young ladies who seem to have been in the habit of paying long visits at his hospitable house, and whom he called his daughters, and corresponded with in the most voluminous and sprightly manner.

"He used to write in a little summer-house or grotto, as it was called, within his garden, before the family was up; and when they met at breakfast he communicated the progress of his story, which by that means had every day a fresh and lively interest. Then began the criticisms, the pleadings for Harriet Byron or Clementina; every turn and every incident was eagerly canvassed, and the author enjoyed the benefit of knowing beforehand how his situations would strike."

One of the members of this little conclave thus describes the scene: "The grot, the garden," she exclaims, "rush upon my view"—

> "And then a choir of listening nymphs appears
> Oppressed with wonder, or dissolved in tears,
> But on her tender fears while Harriet dwells,
> And love's soft symptoms innocently tells,
> They all with conscious smiles these symptoms view,
> And by those conscious smiles confess them true."

The patriarch himself gives, however, a description of this pretty domestic life from a point of view less reverential and more consistent with the light-mind-

edness which is common, we fear, to young womankind.

"I never knew one of you girls," he complains playfully, "put out of your course for the pleasure of the poor man, whom, nevertheless, you profess to honour. His leisure time is generally in a morning. Did ever any one of you rise an hour sooner in favour to him? You were never visible till the breakfast-table had been spread half an hour. A little arm-in-arm turn in the garden after that was necessary to relate your dreams and give account of your night's rest; change of dress came next; then dinner-time approached; then retired to write (till the dinner-bell summoned you), one to one absent favourite, one to another, as love or duty, or both, induced. After dinner a conversation that could not but be agreeable; but dinner-time conversations are seldom other than occasional prattlings on vague subjects: attendance of servants will not permit them to be more. Some charming opportunities talked of by-and-by for reading and conversing. The day we will suppose fine. Your Highmore cannot bear to be confined within the house or garden walls. She throws out her temptations for a walk where she can see and be seen. All the girls accompany her. Nobody must read or be read to till the walkers return. The man of the house is invited to dangle after them; not for an escort—they fear nothing. He, aware of his little consequence to them in their walk, stays frequently at home; gives directions to his gardener; and is but just got up-stairs to his writing (I should *now* rather say *reading*) desk, when the gypsies' return is signified to him by the call of the tea-bell. Down he must go; for why? They are at leisure to expect him. Down goes the passive. . . . Fresh promises to themselves of reading-time. The honest man, who is to be taken up and laid down as they please, is asked if he will not read to them by-and-by. He passively bows: the rather signifies compliance, as the opportunity for the book and his employment is yet at a distance. At last, however (the tea offices all over), they assemble at one large table; one goes to ruffle-making; one to border-making; one to muslin-flowering; one

to drawing; and then the passive man is called to his lesson. He is often interrupted by supper preparations. At last the cloth is laid, all the important works are bagged up; each lady looks pleased and satisfied with her part so well performed of the duties of the day."

But whether listened to with breathless and weeping interest at breakfast, or interjected as an accompaniment to the ruffle-making and muslin-flowering between tea and supper, the gregarious good soul, in his simple vanity, read his book to the girls, collected their impetuous youthful opinions, and himself learned to believe in his own characters, as they grew into actual personages in the lively discussions of the house. And thus was produced the history of *Clarissa*, a book which, after lying buried for years in "gentlemen's libraries," has lately been republished, and reintroduced to popular notice. A more remarkable book has never been written; and when the character of the author, and his age, and all the circumstances that have just been described, are taken into consideration, the reader cannot but feel that the production is unique in literature. The story of a pretty and good girl involved in the mazes of a long courtship, full of sweet sentiments and tender morality—with very black shadows kept respectfully away from her, and never allowed to cloud the white light in which she stands—with a womanish perfection of a lover, and a gradual ascension out of difficulty into the height of blessedness—is the kind of narrative which was to have been expected. Indeed, the succeeding history of *Sir Charles Grandison* fulfils almost

all the requirements of the situation, and feels something like the natural production of the humble optimist and his little court. But *Clarissa* is nothing of all this. The book is long-winded, sometimes tedious, overlaid with moralisings, and full of improbabilities; and yet it is one of the finest tragic efforts of genius—a book which by times touches upon the borders of the sublime.

We are under the disadvantage, at the present moment, of coming in, as it were, at the end of a tolerably lively discussion raised by Mr Dallas's late republication of this remarkable book. No work, perhaps, has ever called forth a greater diversity of opinion. To some critics the story is at once disgusting and improbable, tedious to the last degree, forced and unnatural in its effects, and of the most artificial construction. To these objections Richardson's warmest admirer cannot answer with a decided negative. The story in its chief point is revolting, and the book is prolix beyond all modern conception of the word; and yet it seems difficult to believe that any reader, once fairly entered upon it—"infected," to use Macaulay's forcible but disagreeable expression—could give it up again until he came to the end, or could accompany the heroine through her extraordinary humiliation and triumph without tears. The story turns upon a crime so brutal and cowardly that it is quite beyond any possible gloss of sentiment. Once more, it is Female virtue that is assailed—the theme, apparently, of all others most familiar to the

age—but nothing can be more unlike the rustic resistance and servile gratitude of Pamela than this strange duel to the death between the man and the woman, in which a hundred typical strifes might be embodied. Clarissa herself is such a type of character as could have been set forth only by a man habituated to the society of women, and to look upon things very much from their point of view. She is a delicate creature, whose heart has but begun faintly to awaken to any conception of love or individual inclination at all, when she is suddenly frozen back into herself, into the chill unopened bud of her life, by such a horror as is sufficient to congeal the young blood in its very fountain. Her soft insensibility to any contagion of passion—the shrinking, faint, easily relinquished preference which is all she is ever made to feel for her destroyer—is sometimes brought as an accusation against the perfection of her womanhood. But the critics who do so have not taken the trouble to think that it was a woman in the bud whom Richardson intended to draw—a creature forced into extraordinary development, it is true, but warped by the very influences which urged her life into pathetic blossom, out of that warm and tender sweetness which comes by the natural agency of bright sunshine and common rain. Her heart had begun, as we have said, softly, unawares, to turn towards the man who pretended to love her, with that shy, sweet, gradual impulsion which is one of the most beautiful things in nature. Her eyes and her heart were being drawn to him

modestly and maidenly, in a tenderness half acknowledged, half denied, even to herself; when Fate seized upon the innocent creature, wrapt her in its fatal web, arrested in the first place the rising fancy, chilled and withered it by doubts and fears; and then, by a sudden violent revulsion, closed up the opening bud, with all its fairy colours, and forced forward the pale splendour of despair, chill maiden flower, stealing every hue of colour and perfume of life out of its exquisite climax of sorrow and decay. No man less acquainted with all the secret unseen sweetness of a girl's heart—its brooding over itself, its soft reluctance, its delight in the hesitations and tender delays which irritate passion into frenzy—could have drawn the early Clarissa, so passionless and dutiful, exacting nothing but the right to reject a repugnant suitor, and ready to make a sacrifice of the soft beginnings of liking in her heart, if her parents would have but accepted that pure yet painful offering. Then, when this morning light fades—when the helpless creature is caught into the vortex which is to swallow her up—the reader can see the chill that comes upon the opening flower, can see the soft virginal husks closing up over the arrested bud; and then the drooping and the fading, and sudden bursting forth by its side of the other development, which is so different, so consistent and inconsistent with the first promise of the outraged life.

This conception stands by itself amid all the conceptions of genius. No Greek, no Italian, no English

poet has painted such a figure in the great picture-gallery which is common to the world. Neither ancient nor modern woman has ever stood before us thus pale and splendid in the shame which is not hers, sweet soul, though it kills her. Almost every other victim shrinks and burns with the stain of her own fault; and even Lucretia herself, if more awful, is less womanly, less tender, less sweet, than the maiden creature in whom nature and religion reassert their rights after the first moment of frenzy; who calls for no vengeance, and can accept no expiation, and dies smiling, of no external wound, but only by the deadly puncture of the shame itself, making all other daggers unnecessary. How it came about that a homely soul like that of Richardson, amid the flutter of his pretty fresh companions—the girls that frequented his garden like so many doves—could have fallen upon this tragic ideal, is a very different matter. His earlier and later works are both quite comprehensible, and in harmony with the circumstances; but what unthought-of inspiration made the good man capable of Clarissa, is a question which we do not attempt to answer. In the quaint prosaic garments with which his prolix style has invested her—in the artificial yet not ungraceful costume of the age, the "pale primrose-coloured paduasoy," the Brussels lace cap, the apron of flowered lawn, all set forth with the liveliest realism—it is a virgin-martyr, a poetic visionary being, one of the few original types of art, which we have here before us. Not Desde-

mona, not Imogen, is of herself a more tender creation. They are so much the more fortunate that it is immortal verse that clothes them. Clarissa, for her part, has but a garrulous and pottering expositor, but in her own person she is divine.

We repeat, and with all the strength of conviction, that the highest poetic creation of the age is this one matchless figure. It was inherently a prosaic age, and Richardson was prose itself. If spiritual science had so far advanced in these days as to make it possible that the shade of Shakespeare could have breathed this conception into him, leaving the sexagenarian with stammering lips and tedious tongue to evolve the tender mystery, it would be a feasible sort of explanation. The jewel is clumsily cut, and set in his own way in the heaviest old-fashioned setting, but it is a diamond of the purest water,—and where did he find it? The astonished spectator, looking at him and his surroundings, and at the wonderful work just issued out of his commonplace hands, can but echo the question. Sophia Western is a pretty creature, a sweet sketch of the surface and outside of a woman; but she can no more stand within the charmed niche that encloses Clarissa, than can Harriet Byron or any other conventional heroine. Such a creature exists by her own right, and is not the fruit of observation, or study, or knowledge of the world. She lives, as Miranda does in the island, owing nothing to earth and all to heaven. Not a woman of her generation is half so true to nature; and now that most of the

women of her generation are dead and buried, Clarissa lives, still surprising the warm tears of youth out of world-worn eyes.

The first half of this wonderful book was published some time before the concluding volumes; and nothing can be more amusing than the storm of entreaty, remonstrance, even threats, with which the author was overwhelmed if he should venture to pursue his inexorable purpose. On second thoughts, Clarissa, strange as it appears, must have been Richardson's lawful offspring, and not a heavenly changeling brought to him by Shakespeare's shade. The steadiness with which he resists all persuasion, his obstinate maintenance of his own ideal in the face of a hundred angry critics, is as clear a proof of his paternity as was Solomon's test. He will not have his child mangled by any profane touch, nor desecrate her by vulgar makings-up or impossible recovery, such as were quite in keeping with the character of a Pamela. The urgency and seriousness of the appeals made to him show the extraordinary impression made on his contemporaries, and would be ludicrous in their fervour to any one who had not fallen under the enchantment of the story. Lady Bradshaigh, who was unknown to him at the time, though afterwards one of his closest correspondents, writes to him as follows, with the earnestness of a petitioner for life:—

"I am pressed, sir, by a multitude of your admirers, to plead in behalf of your amiable Clarissa. Having too much reason, from hints given in your four volumes, from a certain adver-

tisement, and from your forbearing to write, after promising all endeavours should be used towards satisfying the discontented —from all these, I say, I have but too much reason to apprehend a fatal catastrophe. I have heard that some of your advisers who delight in horror (detestable wretches!) insisted upon rapes, ruin, and destruction; others, who feel for the virtuous in distress, (blessings for ever attend them!) pleaded for the contrary. Could you be deaf to these and comply with those? . . . It is not murder or any other horrid act, but the preceding distresses which touch and raise the passions of those at least whom an author would wish to please, supposing him to be such a one as I take you to be. Therefore, sir, after you have brought the divine Clarissa to the very brink of destruction, let me entreat (may I say insist upon) a turn that will make your almost despairing readers half mad with joy. I know you cannot help doing it to give yourself satisfaction, for I pretend to know your heart so well that you must think it a crime never to be forgiven, to leave vice triumphant and virtue depressed. . . . If you disappoint me, attend to my curse —May the hatred of all the young, beautiful, and virtuous for ever be your portion! and may your eyes never behold anything but age and deformity! May you meet with applause only from envious old maids, surly bachelors, and tyrannical parents! May you be doomed to the company of such! and, after death, may their ugly souls haunt you! Now, make Lovelace and Clarissa unhappy if you dare!"

The same lady, continuing her remonstrances (which she does at a length and with a fluency which makes the prodigious correspondence of Richardson's heroines a trifle less incredible), makes use of stronger and stronger arguments. "Sure you will think it worth your while to save his soul, sir," she cries, pleading for the reformation of Lovelace. "It is too shocking and barbarous a story for publication!" she exclaims, when another volume has

made her acquainted with the worst that can happen. "My hand trembles, for I can scarce hold the pen. I am as mad as the poor injured Clarissa." Another anonymous correspondent declares: "Since I have heard that you design the end shall be unhappy, I am determined to read no more. I should read the account of her death with as much anguish of mind as I should feel at the loss of my dearest friend." Cibber, in theatrical fervour, on being informed that Richardson intended his heroine to die, shouts—"D—n him if she should!" and asks whether he is to be expected to stand a patient observer of her ruin? In the face of all this hubbub of remonstrance, the author persevered with a steady firmness, quite unlike his ordinary complaisant amiability. He gives his reasons for so doing at length in his letters to Lady Bradshaigh, with as much gravity and seriousness as distinguishes the appeal to him. If it had concerned the life of some one condemned to die, the matter could not have been more solemnly discussed. It is evident that he considers it as a matter of course that all the world should be serious over such a question. He replies to his correspondent's appeal in the following serious strain:—

"What, madam, is the temporary happiness we are so fond of? What the long life we are so apt to covet? The more irksome these reflections are to the young, the gay, and the wealthy, the more necessary are they to be inculcated.

'A verse may find him who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.'

"Of this nature is my design. Religion never was at so low an ebb as at present. And if my work must be supposed of the moral kind, I was willing to try if a religious novel would do good. And did you not perceive that, in the very first letter of Lovelace, all those seeds of wickedness were thick-sown which sprouted up into action afterwards in his character—pride, revenge, a love of intrigue, plot, contrivance. And who is it that asks, *Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?* . . . And as to reforming and marrying Lovelace, and the example to be given by it, what but this that follows would it have been, instead of the amiable one your good-nature and humanity point out. 'Here,' says another Lovelace, 'may I pass the flower and prime of my youth in forming and pursuing the most insidious enterprises. . . . I may at last meet with and attempt a Clarissa, a lady of priceless virtue. I may try her, vex her, plague and torment her worthy heart. I may fit up all my batteries against her virtue; and if I find her proof against all my machinations, and myself tired with rambling, I may then reward that virtue; I may graciously extend my hand; she may give me hers, and rejoice and thank heaven for my condescension in her favour. The Almighty I may suppose at the same time to be as ready with His mercy, foregoing His justice on my past crimes, as if my nuptials with this meritorious fair one were to atone for the numerous distresses and ruins I have occasioned in other families; and all the good-natured, the worthy, the humane part of the world forgiving me too, because I am a handsome and a humorous fellow, will clap their hands with joy and cry out—

'Happy, happy, happy pair,
None but the brave deserve the fair.'

"Indeed, my dear madam," he adds in a following letter, with increasing solemnity, "I could not think of leaving my heroine short of heaven. . . . A writer who follows nature and pretends to keep the Christian system in his eye, cannot make a heaven in this world for his favourites, or represent this life otherwise than as a state of probation. Clarissa, I once more aver, could not be rewarded in this world. To

have given her her reward here, as in a happy marriage, would have been as if a poet had placed his catastrophe in the third act of his play, when his audience were obliged to expect two more. What greater moral proof can be given of a world after this for the rewarding of suffering virtue and for the punishing of oppressive vice, than the inequalities in the distribution of rewards and punishments here below?"

With such solemnity was the question of the ending of a story treated by author and readers! It could not have been more profoundly serious had it concerned the saving of a life. And the very fact that Richardson had thus a manifest motive in his tale, independent of the rules of art, makes it still more apparent with what an intuitive perception of the best principles of art he kept by his original idea. Clarissa made happy would have been a commonplace being, another Pamela, a less serene Miss Byron; while Clarissa outraged, putting aside with a sweet mournful pride the atonement which is impossible, carrying her involuntary pollution to heaven, is the rarest conception. A man who writes a story with a moral purpose is in most cases doubly hampered; but here, fortunately, the interests of morality concurred with the highest necessities of art.

Lovelace, the only other character worth considering in the book, bears tokens of having also been conceived by a man used to contemplate the world from a woman's point of view. He is not in the smallest degree a milksop, nor does he approach the perfections of Sir Charles Grandison by any indications of the nascent prig. He is full of vivacity and spirit

and humour even at his worst; but his wickedness is as different from the frank animalism of Tom Jones as it is possible to conceive. Vice has to him all the attraction of intrigue, all the charm of sentiment and emotion, and that irresistible temptation of universal conquest which is so strong in women. Lovelace, like a true woman's hero, will not allow himself to be beat. He will conquer by fair means, if possible—but if not, by any means. He is bent upon making himself the object of everybody's attention, admiration, wonder, or horror, as the case may be. Though he is not without a certain subtle undercurrent of contempt for the very admirers whom he dazzles and beguiles, it is a necessity of his nature to beguile and dazzle everywhere. And so he does. The reader perceives that the effect he produces is a real effect. It is no assertion of the author, but a visible result worked out by very apparent means. His friend loathes, abjures, and denounces his horrible project, but cannot detach himself from the charm of his personality. Society gazes and averts its eyes with a flutter of horror, yet is continually dazzled by the courageous front he bears, and flattered and melted by the pains he takes to recommend himself to it. Tom Jones's sensuality is a mere matter of disposition—a peccadillo, of which neither he nor his author is ashamed, involving nothing but the temptation and downfall of the moment, not much more important than the robbing of an orchard or the shooting of an unlawful pheasant. He is infinitely

nastier and infinitely more innocent than the subtle seducer, whose name has come to represent a class, happily more rife in fiction than in life. The hero of Fielding would have been harmless as a girl to Clarissa. He would have kissed the hem of her garment notwithstanding his fundamental easy-minded uncleanness. In power and subtlety of conception the hero of Richardson is as far superior to him as he is inferior in execution. Perhaps the very inferiority of execution, indeed—the long-windedness, the wearisome prolixity, as contrasted with the incisive brilliant brevity and clearness of the rival novelist—does but bring out the more, the extraordinary advantage, in point of elevation and depth, which the one has over the other. The genius of Richardson thus unawares took up and profited by what was essentially a feminine ideal. To women, vice of the Tom Jones development is abhorrent and incomprehensible; while vice like that of Lovelace, which sets all the powers to work—which is full of plot and contrivance, of insatiable love of approbation and necessity for conquest, of emotion and mental excitement, and remorse and passion—is something which they can understand and realise. It would be too deep and too curious a question to ask why this feminine conception should have been worked out by a man as it has never been by any female artist, even in a field like this, where women have won many triumphs—and might lead us into speculations which have little to do with Richardson; but yet the fact seems to us very clear. Lovelace

is the detestable, while Clarissa is the attractive, part of the book; and yet he too is full of attraction. His undaunted spirit, his impudent vivacity and readiness, which is never at a loss; the way in which he fights every inch of the ground, taking the blame upon himself, yet never sinking under it, is as fine a picture as any in art; and there is something in his distracted letter, on receiving the intelligence of her death, which reaches the highest tragic height. When all is said that can be said of the imperfections of the workmanship, and the tedious exuberance of detail with which these two wonderful figures are enveloped and overlaid, it is still undeniable that the Man and the Woman stand forth in this book in their mortal struggle with such tragical and solemn force as has seldom been given to any creations of the imagination. The conception is perfect; it is the execution alone which is to blame.

Perhaps no novel has ever been received with such universal enthusiasm. All kinds of people wept and applauded. It flew over the Channel with a swiftness which is seldom equalled even in these days of increased communication, and was translated by the Abbé Prevost, himself a congenial writer, who "softened it," the biographer quaintly tells us, in order to adapt it to—save the mark!—"the more delicate taste of the French." Letters poured upon the author full of a fever of admiration, sometimes most amusingly expressed. One lady, for example, says: "I am more and more charmed with your

Clarissa; it is indeed a noble character, but I fear nowhere to be met with except in your Letters. *What a pity it is you are not a woman,* and blest with means of shining as she did! for a person capable of drawing such a character would certainly be able to act in the same manner if in a like situation." Dr Johnson, in repeated letters, asks characteristically that an index should be made to the book; for it is not, he says, "a performance to be read with eagerness, and laid aside for ever, but will be occasionally consulted by the busy, the aged, and the studious; and therefore I beg that this edition, by which I suppose posterity is to abide, may want nothing that can facilitate its use." There are portions of this correspondence, especially the letters of Mrs Klopstock, the wife of the poet—who, in all the effusiveness of ardent youth, gives Richardson a sketch of her own love-story and happiness—which are touching and charming as any romance. "Oh the heavenly book!" cries this enthusiastic creature. "You will know all what concerns me," she adds, in her pretty German-English. "Love, dear sir, is all what me concerns; and love shall be all what I will tell you in this letter." After a few charming letters, this little episode of real life finds its conclusion in a brief obituary notice—a piece of plain and sad prose—more pathetic than anything in fiction. Richardson's fatherly heart was always open to such confidences. Had he been a woman, as his other correspondent suggests, he could scarcely have been more tenderly

ready to open his sympathies and affections to all who sought them. He is himself, however, moved to complain of the flood of additional occupation thus brought upon him :—

"I am drawn into acquaintance and into correspondences upon it so numerous, and that with and from people of condition, that what time I have to spare from my troublesome and necessary business is wholly taken up. I am teazed," he adds, "by a dozen ladies of note and virtue to give them a good man, as they say I have been partial to their sex and unkind to my own. But, sir, my nervous infirmities you know—time mends them not—and *Clarissa* has almost killed me. You know how my business engages me. You know by what snatches of time I write that I may not neglect that, and that I may preserve that independency which is the comfort of my life. I never sought out of myself for patrons. My own industry and God's providence have been my whole reliance. The great are not great to me unless they are good. And it is a glorious privilege that a middling man enjoys who has preserved his independency, and can occasionally (though not stoically) tell the world what he thinks of that world, in hopes to contribute, though but by his mite, to mend it."

The publication of *Clarissa* thus placed the respectable old printer upon the highest pinnacle of contemporary fame. There is a most amusing semi-romantic episode in his correspondence, touching the beginning of his personal acquaintance with his correspondent Lady Bradshaigh, which is too characteristic to be omitted. The lady (the same who interceded for the reformation of Lovelace and the happiness of Clarissa) had for some time corresponded with him under a fictitious name, and a great deal of coquetting had ensued touching a personal

interview. Richardson, having in vain invited her to his house, and suggested other modes of meeting, at last humours her fancy for stealing a preliminary peep at him in the Park, by such a description of himself as sets the good soul before us in all the homely prose of his daily appearance. Never was a more innocent little intrigue. Lady Bradshaigh herself was, as she informs us, "turned forty," and of the full and rosy development not uncommon at that age. Her "dear man," a certain passive rustic Sir Roger, who makes no appearance in his own person, shared her enthusiasm and amused himself with her letters. Yet she hesitates, like a mischievous girl, over the innocent meeting, and teazes her unknown friend with appearances and disappearances, keeping him promenading about the Mall, while she passes in her chair, and conducting herself with all the malicious freaks of a young flirt. Here is the sketch of his own respectable person, with which Richardson furnishes his troublesome correspondent:—

"I go through the Park once or twice a-week to my little retirement, but I will for a week together be in it every day three or four hours, at your command, till you tell me you have seen a person who answers to this description, namely: Short, rather plump than emaciated, notwithstanding his complaints; about five foot five inches; fair wig; lightish cloth coat, all black besides; one hand generally in his bosom, the other a cane in it, which he leans upon under the skirts of his coat usually, that it may imperceptibly serve him as a support, when attacked by sudden tremors or startings, and dizziness, which too frequently attack him, but, thank God, not so often as formerly; looking directly foreright, as passers-by would imagine,

but observing all that stirs on either hand of him without moving his short neck; hardly ever turning back; of a light-brown complexion; teeth not yet failing him; smoothish faced and ruddy cheeked; at some times looking to be about sixty-five, at other times much younger; a regular even pace, stealing away ground rather than seeming to rid it: a grey eye, too often overclouded by mistiness from the head; by chance lively —very lively it will be, if he have hope of seeing a lady whom he loves and honours: his eye always on the ladies; if they have very large hoops, he looks down and supercilious, and as if he would be thought wise, but perhaps the sillier for that; as he approaches a lady, his eye is never fixed first upon her face, but upon her feet, and thence he raises it up, pretty quickly for a dull eye; and one would think (if we thought him at all worthy of observation) that from her air and (the last beheld) her face, he sets her down in his mind as *so* or *so*, and then passes on to the next object he meets—only then looking back, if he greatly likes or dislikes, as if he would see if the lady appear to be all of a piece in the one light or in the other. Are these marks distinct enough, if you are resolved to keep all the advantages you set out with? And from this odd, this grotesque figure, think you, madam, that you have anything to apprehend? anything that will not rather promote than check your mirth? I dare be bold to say (and allow it too) that you would rather see this figure than any other you ever saw, whenever you should find yourself graver than you wish to be."

Richardson was at this time about sixty, perhaps the first gallant of his age thus pursued and tantalised. The little contest ended in a cordial meeting and long-enduring friendship.

Clarissa was scarcely well out of his hands when we find his friends beginning to assail him about the Good Man, whom it now remained to him to draw. "As to the *fine man*," he writes in 1750, when "the divine *Clarissa*" was but newly published, "what

shall be done if such ladies as Miss Sutton, who can so well tell what she does *not* like, will not do us the honour to tell us what she does? Will she or will you, madam, be so good as to acquaint me what he is to do, and what he is *not* to do, in order to acquire and maintain an exemplary character?"

The answer to this letter affords us a strange glimpse into the social virtue, or rather want of virtue, of the time.

"I believe," his correspondent replies, "the young ladies hardly know themselves, for want of patterns, what an agreeable man with religion and sense is, which makes me wish you would show them one. They are so used to see those they think genteel and polite without morals and religion, that they imagine them almost if not quite incompatible, and are afraid, if they insist too much on the last, they must give up the first."

The correspondence goes on at much length, entering into all the details of the subject. In August 1750, Richardson had begun the required piece of work, but complained of his incapability of carrying it out. "My business has great calls upon me," he says, "my very relaxations are business; altogether, time of life too advanced—I fear, I shall not be able to think of a new work. And then the title is a very audacious one. To draw a man that *good* men would approve, and that young ladies in such an age as this will think amiable—tell me, madam, is not that an audacious task?" But the subject was too tempting an occasion of letter-writing to be let slip. Mrs Donaldson, who is the leader of the assault, continues with unabating energy:—

"To think of a man with religion, sense, and agreeableness is easy, and to say he shall have this or that good quality; but to work these up into a story—to produce these in action—I know nobody who is capable of doing it but Mr Richardson; and if he declines it, how shall I pretend to encourage him? And yet I wish he would try. . . . If our hero must fight, let it be before we are acquainted with him; and when once a man has shown his courage it will keep him from insult. Suppose the woman he likes engaged in her affections, before she knew him, to one of a more modern cast, could we not make our hero show virtue and honour, and at last, to the credit of my sex, triumph over the man of mode? . . . Some faults, you observe, our virtuous man must have—some sallies of passion; the best *man's* character will bear it, though a Clarissa's would not. I will not arrogate any merit to our sex from it, but suppose it arises from custom, education, or what you will, 'tis certain our man must not be an angel. Clarissa's goodness seems, if I may use the expression, intuitive. Our man, to make him natural, must have some failings from passion, but must be soon recovered by reason and religion. . . . Our man must have so much of the Christian and philosopher that reflection must always set him right."

The counsellors became more exacting as time went on:—

"This morning the doctor received a letter from Mr Skelton," writes Mrs Delany. "He says he wishes you were to exhibit a bad woman as well as a good man. I don't know but I wish so too; but not as a principal figure, only in your background, and by way of shade, to set off some of your brightest figures." "My dear agreeable friend," the same lady adds, on an after occasion, "has communicated to me the sketch you have sent her of your truly fine gentleman. I have no fears about him; I am sure he will be as complete as human fancy and judgment can make him. . . . She has told me your dispute about Harriet's owning her passion so freely. If she has mere liking only, she may tell her mind without reserve; but if she is downright in love, it is impossible she should, if as

delicate as I am sure you would have her be. . . . But this restraint goes no further than till the favoured person has made his passion known. Then I think Harriet may (nay, should) frankly and generously avow her inclination. In the mean time I should only allow of some involuntary approbations which may flatter Sir Charles, but for which, if Harriet recollects them, she should condemn herself."

Richardson, on his part, coquets a little, giving his friends to understand that he is much guided by their counsels; but yet, as we have seen, steadfastly taking his own way. He is even pathetic when occasion serves.

"What can I mean, you are pleased to ask," he says, "by seeming uncertain whether I shall publish my new work? Have I not, madam, already obtruded upon the world many volumes? and have I not reason to apprehend that the world will be tired of me if I do? When will this scribbler stop, will it not be asked? But when no more can be written or published by the same hand, then indulgence will possibly for that very reason be exerted in favour of the new piece. And a defunct author will probably meet with better quarter than a living one; especially as he is known to be a man in business —an obscure man, and one who is guilty of very great presumption in daring to write at all, or do anything but print the works of others."

This humility is, perhaps, a little overstrained, considering the triumph of Clarissa over all rivals.

In the letter last quoted he begs the assistance of Mrs Delany and her friends "in describing a scene or two in upper life;" and it is evident that, deluded by this extreme amiability, his correspondents were now and then so rash as to write not only counsels but letters (for insertion in his books) for him, and "remarks"

upon various subjects, for which the novelist is properly grateful, but—puts them in his waste-basket and takes his own way. In short, there can be little doubt that Richardson, while occasionally taking a hint, with that supreme power of natural selection which belongs to genius, did but amuse himself with the deliberations of his little parliament. He permitted them to persuade themselves that they were useful to him, and that their suggestions and criticisms guided his work; but whenever their judgment went contrary to his own, his decision is remorseless, though always full of thanks and acknowledgments. In this matter it is evident he displayed that smiling bland consistent resolution which makes bystanders imagine the man moves by their influence, who is all the time calmly, and without a moment's hesitation, taking his own way.

In less than five years from the publication of *Clarissa*, *Sir Charles Grandison* was given to the world. Its purpose has been so clearly expounded in the letters we have quoted, that it seems unnecessary to add to this description of its leading *motif*. It is the history of the *fine man*, so often referred to —"*our* man," who was to embody in himself every perfection. This intention was but too rigidly carried out. The fine, the splendid, the courteous Sir Charles —politest of lovers, most speckless and charming of men—is a composition too sweet for the common palate. It would be foolish to say that there is not

in this book much of the same charm that we find in *Clarissa;* but a man could not, as one of Richardson's correspondents regretfully remarks, be brought into such a "delicate distress" as a woman; neither do the same rules answer with the coarser male creatures which do very well for his sisters. Sir Charles is the pink of every perfection known to the age; but he is so universally appreciated, so flattered and beloved, everything prospers so beautifully in his hands, that all the admiration the reader can give is forestalled, and he feels himself limping a world behind the enthusiastic audience in the book itself. It is a book as true to the circumstances and antecedents of its author as *Clarissa* is above them. There are all the complications of the love-story—all those delicate expedients for staving off an inevitable *dénouement*, which the art of fiction has since elaborated; there is the excitement of an abduction, so managed as that any possible stigma upon the heroine, or suggestion of impropriety, should be avoided; there are a succession of promising duels, all successfully eluded by the skill and grace and irresistible courage of the matchless hero; and, finally, there is the double love, with all its delicacies, which seemed at one time to secure for the author the happy ending all his friends demanded, and the unhappy ending which he himself approved. But Richardson was older, and perhaps more persuadable, and Clementina had no grievance to make life impossible, as Clarissa had; and accord-

ingly, all ends, as the ladies would have it, in rose-water and confectionery and wedding-cakes, actual and prospective.

Perhaps it is beyond the powers of ordinary human nature to strike the highest chords of mortal music more than once; Richardson was no Shakespeare, but a very commonplace man, preferred, one can scarcely tell how, to the privilege of one creation. But his wings lasted him only till that commission was accomplished. Into his little natural round, which he had paced in *Pamela*, he falls back again in *Sir Charles Grandison*. He had been snatched out of it into higher regions for one moment of full inspiration, but now the good old soul dropped back. His garland and his singing-robes fell from him. His fine gentleman is virtue incarnate in a laced coat and the daintiest of ruffles. He wears gold lace and point upon his very soul. Silk and velvet and embroidery are moral qualities in him. He has no existence out of those fine, too fine, clothes; his principles and his manners are carefully cut to harmonise with that lovely exterior. The ideal is still feminine, but it has shifted its ground and become a kind of housemaid's ideal, the perfection of everything that is *fine*. In *Clarissa*, as we have said, the author had seized, with a perfection which as yet no woman has equalled, the higher tone of feminine feeling. In *Sir Charles Grandison* he has caught, with a reality equally unrivalled, the lower and less exalted tone. Nothing could be more exact

than the flutter of womanish correspondences, the universal worship given by all the circle to the idol in the midst; the mixture of envy and fondness with which his chosen wife is surrounded; the girlish murmurs of applause, the frank adoration of the sisters, the beatific avowals of the bride. Such a chanting of litanies and burning of incense is, unfortunately for the objects of it, still a frequent evidence of womanish enthusiasm. Its effect, generally, is to make the man who is the central figure look extremely foolish to the outside world. But here the instincts of the author come in to save that last degradation. Sir Charles is not made to look foolish. How he is saved from it, it is difficult to tell—but he is saved. He is invested with all the preternatural solemnity and grandeur of the as yet undeveloped being familiarly known to this too familiar age as a prig; but he is not made to look like a fool—which, in the circumstances, is about the highest praise that could be given.

Sir Charles Grandison was published in 1753, the author being sixty-four, still involved in the toils of business, and suffering from nervous complaints, which often made him unable to write. Its reception by the world was no less flattering than had been that of the others. His friend, Dr Young, who had feared that the new work might diminish the reputation gained by *Clarissa*, retracted his opinion at once. He writes:—

> "I now applaud what I presumed to blame;
> After Clarissa you shall rise in fame."

"I look upon you as an instrument of providence adjusted to the peculiar exigencies of the times," says the same admiring friend, "in which all would be *fine gentlemen*, and only are at a loss to know what that means. While they read, perhaps, from pure vanity, they do not read in vain, and are betrayed into benefit whilst mere amusement is their pursuit. . . . And as I look upon you as an instrument of providence, I likewise look on you as a sure heir of a double immortality. When our language fails one indeed may cease; but the failure of the heavens and the earth will put no period to the other."

This letter begins with an outburst of "Joy to you, dear sir, and joy to the world; you have done great things for it; and I will venture to affirm that no one shall read you without benefit or—guilt." In such strains did his friends sound forth the praises of the successful author. And indeed it was for this high reward he consciously strove—not for the guerdon of art, or such praise as might be shared by a profane boisterous Fielding or wicked Tristram Shandy. He himself informs us that his novels appear in the humble guise of novels, "only by way of accommodation to the manners and tastes of an age overwhelmed with luxury, and abandoned to sound and sensitiveness;" and, complaining of some excisions made by his French translator, the Abbé Prevost, adds: "He treats the story" (*Clarissa*) "as a true one; and says, in one place, that the English editor has often sacrificed his story to moral instructions, warnings, &c. The very motive with me," adds Richardson, "of the story's being written at all."

These words are amusingly suggestive of the differences of national conception in point of art. Yet

it is curious to find that the success of Richardson's works, and especially of *Clarissa*, in France, was immediate; and there can be no doubt that they are still better known and more appreciated among our neighbours than by ourselves—a fact, perhaps, not so extraordinary as it looks upon the surface, since the classical productions of any language are always first presented to foreign students. Mrs Barbauld tells us of a Frenchman who, in her own time and knowledge, "paid a visit to Hampstead for the sole purpose of finding out the house in the *flask walk*, where Clarissa lodged, and was surprised at the ignorance or indifference of the inhabitants on that subject."

Grandison was the last of Richardson's works. In it he had completed the cycle of labour which commended itself to his mind. He had drawn (accidentally) the simple girl resisting vice, and making a very good thing of her virtue. Startled by his own success, he had then roused all his faculties to the creation of a paragon maiden; and the only thing that remained for him to do was then the paragon man. That task fulfilled, his office as a moralist was over. In vain his friends tempted him to other exertions. The *bad woman* of Mr Skelton, the *widow* of Lady Bradshaigh, had no attractions for him. His work was done; and it is no small testimony to the simple kindly nature of the man to find him back at his printing, writing the invaluable judicious letters of an experienced publisher to the authors whose works passed through his hands. Thus, all the blaze

of his own literary fame still surrounding him, we find him giving modest counsel to Dr Young about the preface to the *Night Thoughts*. "I humbly think this part cannot be too delicately mentioned," he says. "Might not, sir, the manner of introducing what relates to the army be less violent, if I may so express myself, and the connection be made more easy?" "A thousand thanks, my best friend, for restoring me to myself," cries Young, in reply; "I shall follow your advice in the dedication." This is not the only instance of his careful regard for the fame and success of his friends. He had but a few years more to live, but his activity was as yet undiminished. To the last he continued to write letters, discussing all sorts of subjects, social ethics of every description, and the semi-metaphysical questions which are dear to women, with his dear girls, who call him "my papa," and communicate with each other to his praise and glory: "Miss Hecky," writing to "her Sukey" or "her Prissy," in strains of adoration, mingled with the liveliest sprightly sketches of their odd old-fashioned life. He pulled down his old printing-offices, and built new and much enlarged ones, while all this pleasant chatter went on; and how the old man, superintending his work and his buildings, could find time for letters of a dozen pages, is a mystery which the reader will find it difficult to fathom. He was worried, too, by an Irish piracy of his books, which gave him no small trouble, and by many bodily infirmities. It is taking an ungener-

ous advantage of the kind soul to postpone to this twilight period of his days the quotation of his sentiments about his great rivals; and yet these are too characteristic to be left out. We have already said that he never forgave Fielding for the spiteful travesty attempted in the *Joseph Andrews*—a feeling which is very comprehensible, and even excusable, and no doubt coloured his judgment in respect to his competitor's future works. But it is very doubtful whether, under any circumstances, two minds so dissimilar could have appreciated each other. It is thus Richardson speaks of the unquestionably shabby meaning, so soon and so splendidly swallowed up in one real creation, of Fielding's first work:—

"So long as the world will receive, Mr Fielding will write. Have you ever seen a list of his performances? Nothing but a shorter life than I can wish him can hinder him from writing himself out of date. The *Pamela* which he abused in his *Shamela* taught him how to write to please, though his manners are so different. Before his *Joseph Andrews* (hints and names taken from that story with a lewd and ungenerous engraftment), the poor man wrote without being read, except when his *Pasquins*, &c., roused party attention and the legislature at the same time. According to that of Juvenal, which may be thus translated,—

> 'Wouldst thou be read, or wouldst thou bread insure,
> Dare something worthy *Newgate* or the *Tower*.'

In the former of which (removed from inns and alehouses) will some of his worst scenes be laid, and perhaps not unusefully. I hope not."

At a later period Richardson announces that "Fielding has over-written or rather *under*-written

himself" in *Amelia*. "The piece," he says, "is as dead as if it had been published forty years ago as to sale. . . . His brawls, his jeers, his gaols, his sponging-houses, are all drawn from what he has seen or known. As I said, he has little or no invention." The good man, however, reaches the climax of hallucination, when he thus addresses Miss Fielding, the sister of the moralist, and herself the author of some forgotten books. He tells her he has just reperused a collection of letters published by her. "What knowledge of the human heart!" he exclaims; "well might a critical judge of writing say, as he did to me, that your late brother's knowledge of it was not (fine writer as he was) comparable to yours. His was but as the knowledge of the outside of a clock-work machine, while yours was that of all the fine springs and movements of the inside"!

Nor is he more lenient to Sterne. "Who is this Yorick? you are pleased to ask me," he writes to the Bishop of Sodor and Man. "You cannot, I imagine, have looked into his books; execrable, I cannot but call them." A lady, whom he quotes, a friend of his daughter's in the country, gives a less severe but not less decided judgment. "There is subject for mirth, and some affecting strokes," she says. "Yorick, Uncle Toby, and Trim are admirably characterised, and very interesting; . . . but let not *Tristram Shandy* be ranked among the well-chosen authors in your library." "I am told that the third and fourth volumes are worse, if possible, than the two first,"

adds Richardson, "which only I have had the patience to run through." Thus it will be seen that, open-hearted as the good man was, there was a limit to his amiability; and that his rivals or betters in his special department were less dear to him than the rest of mankind. "Mark my prophecy that, by another season, this performance" (*Tristram Shandy*) "will be as much decried as it is now extolled," says the correspondent whom he quotes; "for it has not intrinsic merit sufficient to prevent it sinking when no longer upheld by the short-lived breath of fashion." Let us forgive him, if he takes pleasure in the thought. It is the only meanness of which the good soul seems capable; and when we consider the ridicule that had been poured upon himself by all the wits, their scorn of his humble degree and respectable virtuous life, and the solemn sense he had of the responsibilities attending the literary faculty, and the heavy guilt of every man who used it in indifference to the interests of morality, some excuse may be found for the old man. No doubt he thought it was the evil tendencies of these works that moved him to so much indignation; and it is equally without doubt that in an author, himself so successful, jealousy could not be the only motive, but that a real and unaffected horror of sin and nastiness must have counted for much in his ill-nature. If any of the present living brotherhood of poets were to employ similar language in respect to Mr Swinburne, would anybody say it was envy?

The last few years of Richardson's life were spent in comparative ease and leisure. He had made his business great and flourishing, and, with a natural regret, lamented that he had no son to leave it to. He had been long subject to infirmities which are vaguely described as nervous disorders, one of which was a shaking hand, which made him unable to write. These weaknesses increased with age; and in the year 1761, when he had attained the age of seventy-two, a stroke of apoplexy put an end to his blameless homely life. He left four daughters behind him, all that remained of his family, and a reputation quite unique in history. It seems needless to repeat the description of an anomaly so well known and fully acknowledged. He was a respectable tradesman, distinguished by no aspirations (so far as is apparent) beyond his peers; a good printer, entering with all his heart into his business; a comfortable soul, fond of his fireside and his slippers, and his garden and all homely pleasures; never owing a guinea nor transgressing a rule of morality, according to the dreadful accusation we have elsewhere quoted; and yet so much a poet that he has added at least one character to the inheritance of the world, of which Shakespeare need not have been ashamed — the most celestial thing, the highest imaginative effort of his generation. Nothing can be more unlike Richardson than Clarissa, and yet without Richardson Clarissa had not been.

XI

THE SCEPTIC

THE SCEPTIC.

THERE is no title which has been more differently applied, or called forth more diverse sentiments, than that by which we have distinguished the subject of the present sketch. To many, perhaps most, readers it is a name of reproach, implying at once intellectual blindness and some degree of moral obliquity. It presents before them the image of a man persistently, and perhaps wilfully, denying the truth, closing his eyes to it, preferring not to see; a man whose evil life moves him to reject the unvarying morality of revelation, or whose self-conceit prompts him to place his own opinion above all authority; a being from whom good deeds and virtuous dispositions are not to be looked for—who is without principle, and therefore not to be depended on in this life, and whom, with a certain satisfaction, the most charitable may set down as likely to wake up very uncomfortably in the life beyond. On the other hand, there are many, in an age which has taken "honest doubt" under its

patronage and protection, to whom a sceptic is an interesting being, almost crazed by his efforts to believe in Christianity, sadly acknowledging all its beauties, but bound by hard fate to see more clearly, to sift evidence more closely, to judge more conscientiously, than his fellows. The real character, as we are about to attempt its portraiture, has little in common with either conception. The word sceptic, like the corresponding word enthusiast, describes a certain class of minds rather than a peculiar set of opinions. In this sense there are some who are good Christians and yet sceptics undeniable, just as there are enthusiasts whose minds are untouched by religion. The character is not attractive, nor does it appeal to those higher human sympathies which are called forth by manifestations of such qualities as faith, loyalty, and self-devotion; but yet it is a real personality, and not unworthy of attention among the many different types of intellectual life.

The character of the true sceptic was never more clearly exhibited than by David Hume, the philosopher and historian, whose name is so well known and firmly established among the greatest of his century, and whose works and influence have produced as much effect upon men's minds and beliefs as it is possible for a perpetual negative to produce. He is not only a born representative of the class, but even to a great extent of his time, which was an unbelieving age, full of profanities, great and small, and an immense and astonishing indifference to everything

spiritual and unseen. He was one of the most clear-sighted men of his day—keen in pursuit of truth, not moved by any throes of mental anguish because of his inability to believe one dogma or another, but still far from setting himself up as an authority above other authorities, or arrogating a superior judgment. He was no profligate, eager to cover his sins by the abrogation of moral laws—no revolutionary, bent upon satisfying his own ambition by the overturn of all things. Neither was his spirit affected by the gloomy nothingness of the system he believed. He was an honest, cheerful, comfortable, unexcited soul, full of a steady power of labour, much patience and good-humour, and a certain sober light-heartedness, whatever was his fortune. The devoutest believer, with all the succours of religion, could not have behaved with more composure and dignity in the presence of death; nor is the sober quiet of his life less remarkable. He was good to his friends, not ungenerous to his opponents. He took success quietly and misfortune undauntedly. Pope Innocent's musings, in Mr Browning's poem, over the strange and woeful fact that "the Christians in their panoply" do no greater deeds than those performed by "the instincts of the natural man"—could not have had a more remarkable proof than is furnished by this unbeliever. He was in his way a good man, as good as anybody round him. He was a cheerful human creature, quite undaunted by the darkness in which his being was shrouded; accepting life with all

its inevitable penalties just as bravely, good-humouredly, and patiently as if the rewards of heaven awaited him at the end, yet believing in no rewards of heaven. The problem is one which it is right to consider on its own merits, and with as little prejudice as we may.

David Hume was born in the year 1711, of a good Berwickshire family, well thought of in the countryside, though without any apparent distinction but that of rural gentility. His mother, to whose sole charge he was left at a very early age, was "a woman," as he tells us, "of singular merit, who, though young and handsome, devoted herself entirely to the rearing and education of her children." He "passed through the ordinary course of education with success"—though his name, we are informed by Mr Hill Burton, his biographer, from whose full and able narrative we chiefly quote, does not occur in any list of graduates of his university.

His earliest letters are full of a clumsy precocious philosophy, quaintly mingled with familiar gossip. "Greatness and elevation of soul," he writes, "are to be found only in study and contemplation; this can alone teach us to look down on human assailants;" and then he proceeds to inform his correspondent that "John has bought a horse; he thinks it neither cheap nor dear. It has no fault, but boggles a little." This junction of the lowly and the sublime belongs to the year 1727, when he was sixteen. By that time he had gone through his university career, according

to the curious habit of Scotland, and had returned to Ninewells, his ancestral home, there to reflect upon himself and his thoughts, and make unconscious soundings in the yet shallow waters on which his boyish boat was launched. Even at this early period the character of the man had already formed itself; a ponderous thoughtfulness, moved by no special sympathy for his kind, nor high-placed ideal, fond of fact and certainty, uninfluenced even by that superficial imagination which belongs to youth, shows itself in him. One of the most remarkable indications of his curiously unexcitable fancy is a "Historical Essay upon Chivalry and Modern Honour," which was found among his early papers. "It is written with great precision and neatness," we are informed, and is "no despicable specimen of caligraphy;" which is a pleasant reminder that the boy-philosopher was still a boy, fond of his young productions, and almost as much interested in the fineness of his up-strokes as in the solidity of his conclusions. But even this subject, generally so dazzling to the unsophisticated mind, has no effect on the imagination of our young sceptic. The theory he forms in respect to it is about as disparaging to chivalry as anything which could have entered the *blasé* brain of a prosaic old man of the world. He tells us that the whole system was but a barbarous attempt to imitate the graces of the ancient civilisation—the device of a savage to replace the majestic and beautiful models of antiquity by heaping together a mass of fantastic ornaments. A

similar impulse, he says, carried into the regions of art, produced "that heap of confusion and irregularity" known as Gothic architecture! As the latter was a barbarous effort to copy the beauty of ancient buildings, so the former was a frenzied attempt to imitate the classic splendour of manners and morals. Seventeen years or so old, with the blood of knights in his veins, living in a historic country full of tales and tokens of wild feudal devotion and heroism, the boy could find no better nor profounder explanation of a system so strangely powerful that (in theory at least) it made the least worldly of all codes dominant for centuries over a self-seeking world. Even his youth, which might have been of some use in such an emergency, gave him no better aid than his maturity did in after times; and thus it will be seen that from the very beginning of his career, his want of imagination baffled the very clearness of his insight, and made him morally incapable, as the sceptical intelligence always must be, of penetrating into the deepest secrets of that human nature which he professed to plumb and fathom with impartial severe logic to its most intimate depths.

This essay, which was never published, belongs to the prefatory period of his life which he spent at home—a period of about seven years between the conclusion of his formal education and his first start in life. This was a long time to be wasted by a Scotch lad of thrifty enterprising race, as well as of unusual mental powers; but probably the development of his

genius was not of a kind to impress the little audience surrounding him. "Our Davie's a fine good-humoured crater," his mother is reported to have said of him, "but uncommon wake-minded;" and although he showed no lack of energy and resolution in later life, it is evident that to all outward appearance he was passive in this opening chapter; brooding much on himself and his capabilities, and bent on his own way, yet offering no demonstration of active will, or strong inclination, to those who supposed it lay in their hands to decide the tenor of his life. His family, which, like so many families of Scotch gentlefolks, was largely connected with lawyers, destined him for that profession—for he was a younger brother scantily provided for. "My studious disposition, my sobriety, and my industry, gave my family a notion that the law was a proper profession for me," he says; "but I formed an insurmountable aversion to everything but the pursuits of philosophy and general learning." His mother and brother, sagacious, homely observers, thinking of nothing beyond the ordinary course of existence, and such occupation as might become the son of a good house, made their plans for him as they would have done for any other younger son. It was no evil lot to which they devoted him. He might have become Baron Hume, like his nephew. He might have risen to the bench, and added a Lord Ninewells to the list of the family honours. The career was honourable and familiar, and scarcely even precarious—not to be mentioned in the same

breath with its only alternatives—the position of a travelling tutor or "governor," or the doubtful success of trade. The Scottish reader will easily call up before him the picture of the country house, half mansion, half farm, the acute leddy, with her undisguised Scotch and practical views, and John the laird, who thought of no other love so long as his mother ruled the frugal house, and kept the old family bonds intact.

But while they discussed and rediscussed "our Davie's" fortunes, he himself was occupied with the matter in a very different way. Such a crisis as forms the turning-point in the lives of so many notable men, had come upon the lad in the strangest unfamiliar shape. The form it took was not of that struggle between the great moral and spiritual forces which we understand so little, out of which he might have come *converted*, to use the ordinary phraseology, and conscious of new motives and a changed life. It was not a supreme crisis of the heart, rent asunder by human passion. But yet something had come upon him which he could not explain, which brought him to a dead stop in his career, and was beyond his control; and the strange boy perceived by instinct the gravity of the crisis. Inspecting himself with critical eyes, he saw that the moment was one which must determine his future existence. His heart and his soul had come to a pause, and he had to explain the reason to himself. He does this in a letter to a physician, which, long as it is, is too characteristic to

be passed by. In this curious composition he sets down every detail of his case with calm interest and composure: it does not occur to him to attribute it to any influence from heaven or hell. That God should be likely to take any trouble in the matter is not within his conception of possibilities; neither is there any terrestrial creature who has been instrumental in producing the strange tumult and prostration which he feels within him. Passion has nothing to do with it; his affections have received no check, his hopes no disappointment. Having maturely considered all things, he concludes naturally that it must, after all, be his body that is to blame. He must be ill, though he does not know it. Thus, in an age which had not begun to form any dogmas about the influence of the digestion upon the mind, that modern theory is anticipated by a lad of twenty, in whom one would naturally suppose a thousand fantastic reasons for these mental disturbances would present themselves, sooner than that simple stomachical explanation which saves so much trouble. The strongest evidence of a mind already full of energy and activity, in the truest and liveliest action, and of heart, soul, and imagination totally unawakened, is to be found in this letter, which was written apparently not later than his twentieth year:—

"SIR,—Not being acquainted with this handwriting, you will probably look to the bottom to find the subscription, and not finding any will certainly wonder at this strange method of addressing you. I must here, in the beginning, beg you to excuse it, and to persuade you to read what follows with some

attention, must tell you that this gives you an opportunity to do a very good-natured action, which I believe is the most powerful argument I can use. I need not tell you that I am your countryman, a Scotsman; for without any such tie, I dare rely upon your humanity even to a perfect stranger, such as I am. The favour I beg of you is your advice, and the reason why I address myself in particular to you need not be told, as one must be a skilful physician, a man of letters, of wit, of good sense, and of great humanity, to give me a satisfying answer. . . . Trusting, however, to your candour and generosity, I shall, without further preface, proceed to open up to you the present condition of my health, and to do that the more effectually shall give you a kind of history of my life, after which you will easily learn why I keep my name a secret.

"You must know, then, that from my earliest infancy I found always a strong inclination to books and letters. As our college education in Scotland, extending little further than the languages, ends commonly when we are about fourteen or fifteen years of age, I was after that left to my own choice in my reading, and found it incline me almost equally to books of reasoning and philosophy, and to poetry and the polite authors. Every one who is acquainted either with the philosophers or critics knows that there is nothing yet established in either of these two sciences, and that they contain little more than endless disputes, even in the most fundamental articles. Upon examination of these, I found a certain boldness of temper growing in me which was not inclined to submit to any authority in these subjects, but led me to seek out some new medium by which truth might be established. After much study and reflection on this, at last, when I was about eighteen years of age, there seemed to be opened up to me a new scene of thought which transported me beyond measure, and made me, with an ardour natural to young men, throw up every other pleasure or business to apply entirely to it. The law, which was the business I designed to follow, appeared nauseous to me, and I could think of no other way of pushing my fortune in the world but that of a scholar and philosopher. I was infinitely happy in this course of life for some months, till at last, about the beginning of Sep-

tember 1729, all my ardour seemed in a moment to be extinguished, and I could no longer raise my mind to that pitch which formerly gave me such excessive pleasure. I felt no uneasiness or want of spirits when I laid aside my book, and therefore never imagined there was any bodily distemper in the case, but that my coldness proceeded from a laziness of temper which must be overcome by redoubling my application. In this condition I remained for nine months, very uneasy to myself, as you may well imagine, but without growing any worse, which was a miracle. There was another particular which contributed more than anything to waste my spirits and bring on me this distemper, which was, that having read many books of morality, such as Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch, and being smit with their beautiful representations of virtue and philosophy, I undertook the improvement of my temper and will along with my reason and understanding. I was continually fortifying myself with reflections against death, and poverty, and shame, and pain, and all the other calamities of life. These, no doubt, are exceeding useful when joined with an active life, because the occasion being presented along with the reflection works it into the soul, and makes it take a deep impression; but in solitude they serve to little other purpose than to waste the spirits, the force of the mind meeting with no resistance, but wasting itself in the air, like our arm when it misses its aim. This, however, I did not learn but by experience, and till I had already ruined my health, though I was not sensible of it. . . . Thus I have given you a full account of the condition of my body; and without staying to ask pardon, as I ought to do, for so tedious a story, shall explain to you how my mind stood all this time, which on every occasion, especially in this distemper, have a very near connection together. Having now time and leisure to cool my inflamed imagination, I began to consider seriously how I should proceed in my philosophical inquiries. I found that the moral philosophy transmitted to us by antiquity laboured under the same inconvenience that has been found in their natural philosophy, of being entirely hypothetical, and depending more upon invention than experience: every one consulted his fancy in erecting

schemes of virtue and of happiness without regarding human nature, upon which every moral conclusion must depend. This, therefore, I resolved to make my principal study, and the source from which I would derive every truth in criticism as well as morality. I believe it is a certain fact, that most of the philosophers who have gone before us have been overthrown by the greatness of their genius, and that little more is required to make a man succeed in this study than to throw off all prejudices either for his own opinions or for those of others. At least this is all I have to depend on for the truth of my reasonings, which I have multiplied to such a degree, that within these three years I find I have scribbled many a quire of paper, in which there is nothing contained but my own inventions. This, with the reading most of the celebrated books in Latin, French, and English, and acquiring the Italian, you may think a sufficient business for one in perfect health, and so it would had it been done to any purpose; but my disease was a cruel encumbrance on me. I found that I was not able to follow out any train of thought by one continued stretch of view, but by repeated interruptions, and by refreshing my eye from time to time upon other objects. Yet with this inconvenience I have collected the rude materials for many volumes; but in reducing these to words, when one must bring the idea he comprehended in gross, nearer to him, so as to contemplate its minutest parts, and keep it steadily in his eye, so as to copy these parts in order, —this I found impracticable to me, nor were my spirits equal to so severe an employment. Here lay my greatest calamity. I had no hopes of delivering my opinions with such elegance and neatness as to draw to me the attention of the world, and I would rather live and die in obscurity than produce them maimed and imperfect.

"Such a miserable disappointment I scarce ever remember to have heard of. The small distance betwixt me and perfect health makes me the more uneasy in my present situation. It is a weakness rather than a lowness of spirits which troubles me, and there seems to be as great a difference betwixt my distemper and common vapours, as betwixt vapours and madness. I have noticed in the writings of the French mystics, and in

those of our fanatics here, that when they give a history of the situation of their souls, they mention a coldness and desertion of the spirit which frequently returns; and some of them, at the beginning, have been tormented with it many years. As this kind of devotion depends entirely on the force of passion, and consequently of the animal spirits, I have often thought that their case and mine were pretty parallel, and that their rapturous admirations might discompose the fabric of the nerves and brain as much as profound reflections, and that warmth or enthusiasm which is inseparable from them."

That the subject of this curious piece of analysis should himself perceive the resemblance between his own condition and that of the "French mystics" and "fanatics" at home, is one of the strangest features in the strange narrative. And that it should never occur to him to attribute it to a mental or spiritual cause, is more remarkable still. The idea of any conflict for him between the powers of light and darkness—of any rising up of nature within him, to resolve once for all the inevitable problem on which side his life was to be ranged, would have simply amused the young man. He was too good-tempered and genial by nature to have treated the supposition with a sneer; but the unheroic boy would have laughed at the notion with unintentional humility. The letter we have just quoted was, it appears probable, never sent to the eminent physician for whom it was destined; but remained among his papers, to throw its homely revelation upon a youth unlike the youth of other men: an early morning without dew or mist, or signs of the recent aurora—calm in colour as a leaden sky, sober as a day in autumn, quiet as

the silence of the fields; yet so divorced from all natural metaphors, that there is no sense of infinitude, no mystery of space or distance about it, but all toned down into a universal calm.

"I would not quit my pretensions to learning but with my last breath," he adds, while discussing the chances of "a more active life" which were before him; but something had to be done to break the spell which no doubt the quiet existence of Ninewells rather strengthened than interrupted. In the brief and succinct biography which he entitles "My own Life," the story is told in half-a-dozen words. "My very slender fortune," he says, "being unsuitable to this plan of life (that of a student and philosopher), and my health being a little broken by my ardent application, I was tempted, or rather forced, to make a very feeble trial for entering into a more active scene of life. In 1734 I went to Bristol with some recommendations to eminent merchants, but in a few months found that scene totally unsuitable to me." This was all that came of the attempt to throw his life into a new channel. In the same year he seems to have finally made up his mind to yield to his inclinations, and let fortune and the world go by. Such a man was qualified, as few men are, for the austere effort of frugality which enables a poor scholar to live on a pittance out of love for his books. Imagination, it is evident, would never lead him astray; and though he was always kind and friendly, and ready to share with his intimates, yet his range

of sympathies was too limited to move him towards any of the foolish generosities which we pardon to youth. Then he had the training of his careful Berwickshire home to fortify him in his new career. The amount of the income upon which he ventured to embrace a life of philosophical research is not mentioned; but as he afterwards assures us that he has acquired a competence when he manages to scrape together £1000, and at a much later period of his life thinks £150 a-year a sufficient provision for life in London, it must have been scanty indeed. His first start in life was attended by an entire separation from home and all its associations. "I went over to France," he says, "with a view of prosecuting my studies in a country retreat; and I then laid that plan of life which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature."

It would be against all the traditions of literature not to respect and glorify this determination—which was, there is no doubt, in its way a noble one. But yet there is something in the picture of the young Scotchman retiring to the dismal quiet of a French provincial town—of all solitudes the most restricted, and of all conventional places the most conventional—separating himself without any profounder cause from his ancient associations, which chills out the sympathy from the mind of the beholder. It is another proof

of that strange good-humoured indifference to all the deeper wants of humanity, which was always one of his leading characteristics. He paused for some time in Paris—a more natural shelter for all the busy thoughts that were germinating in his mind—and went about in that new strange world attracted by matters very little likely, one would have thought, to secure the attention of a young man setting out in the world. Instead of affording us a glimpse of the picturesque old capital which now exists no longer, he tells us of the miracles performed at the tomb of the Abbé Paris; recording with curious significance and secret irony the "incontestable" proof of miraculous cures wrought by that holy personage. His mind, it is evident, was more occupied with the different trains of thought gradually growing to completion within himself, than by the external novelty around him, notwithstanding the favourable impression which French life, manners, and dispositions had made upon him. He proceeded to Rheims on leaving Paris, and there established himself. It "is to be the place of my abode for some considerable time," he writes, "and where I hope both to spend my time happily for the present; and lay up a stock for the future." This curious choice of an obscure French country town, possessing, no doubt, a university, but not of any special distinction, is one of the least comprehensible things in the history of the time: in which we constantly find travellers of note, and young noblemen with their governors, established in the

French provinces, in towns now fallen into complete obscurity, and at no time more remarkable, except, perhaps, for the beauty of their churches, than an English county town of corresponding size. And that one attraction, the glorious Gothic cathedrals of France, was little appreciated by the eighteenth century.

The first piece of contemporary observation which Hume offers us is marked, like everything else, by his peculiar modes of thought. The difference of manners in France and England struck him as it does every stranger; not, however, with unreasoning enthusiasm, but with a more characteristic impulse to examine the matter: and the result of his careful analysis was the conclusion that the French were indeed more polite and obliging at heart, but that the English had a better method of expressing it—an opinion totally opposed to the ordinary theory.

"By the expressions of politeness," he says, "I mean those outward deferences and ceremonies which custom has invented to supply the defect of real politeness or kindness that is unavoidable towards strangers or indifferent persons even in some of the best dispositions in the world. These ceremonies ought to be so contrived as that, though they do not deceive or pass for sincere, yet still they please by their appearance, and lead the mind, by its own consent and knowledge, into an agreeable delusion. One may err by running into either of the two extremes—that of making them too like truth or too remote from it—though we may observe that the first is scarce possible, because whenever any expression or action becomes customary it can deceive nobody. Thus, when the Quakers say "your friend," they are as easily understood as another that says "your humble servant." The French err in the contrary extreme—that of making their civilities too remote from truth—which is a fault. . . . Another fault I find in the French manners is

that, like their clothes and furniture, they are too glaring. An English fine gentleman distinguishes himself from the rest of the world by the whole tenor of his conversation more than by any particular part of it; so that, though you are sensible he excels, you are at a loss to tell in what, and have no remarkable civilities or compliments to pitch on as a proof of his politeness. These he so smooths over that they pass for the common actions of life, and never put you to the trouble of returning thanks for them. The English politeness is always greatest when it appears least."

This would seem a sufficiently trivial subject to occupy the thoughts of the young philosopher, but it displays the penetrating acuteness and analytical power of his mind as well as if it had been more intrinsically important. Indeed, the very slightness of the occasion shows more completely his mental habit of sounding to the depths and tracing every superficial indication back to its origin in the unseen recesses of human nature: a habit quite compatible with his incapacity for comprehending that nature's holier secrets. He seems to have remained about a year at Rheims, and from thence went on to La Flêche, where, with a curious delight in the society of the ecclesiastical caste of which he was the professed enemy, he hung about the Jesuits' College, picking up odd bits of information, and engaging in many a strange discussion, full on the one side as on the other of mental reservation and half-conscious sophistry. "I was walking in the cloisters of the Jesuits' College," he relates on one such occasion, "engaged in a conversation with a Jesuit of some parts and learning, who was relating to me and urging some

nonsensical miracle lately performed in their convent, when I was tempted to dispute against him ; and as my head was full of the topics of my Treatise of Human Nature, which I was at that time composing, this argument" (his afterwards celebrated argument against miracles) "immediately occurred to me, and I thought it much gravelled my companion ; but at last he observed to me that it was impossible for that argument to have any solidity, because it operated equally against the Gospel as the Catholic miracles, which observation I thought proper to admit as a sufficient answer. I believe you will allow that the freedom, at least, of this reasoning makes it somewhat extraordinary to have been the produce of a convent of Jesuits, though perhaps you may think the sophistry of it savours plainly of the place of its birth."

The last suggestion comes oddly enough from the young philosopher who has just owned that *he thought proper to admit* as a sufficient answer an argument which in reality had no weight whatever with him, as his correspondent was aware. Greek had met Greek in this fine encounter; and notwithstanding the proverbial subtlety of the Jesuit, one doubts if the priest under his convent cloisters was a whit surpassed in frankness or undermatched in finesse by the burly young foreigner in his laced clothes who paced about those courts of learning by his side, breathing the same air as once Descartes breathed, and looking on with acute, unsympathetic, yet good-humoured eyes at the curious pieces of human mechanism around him, on whom

he could try the success of an argument or point the edge of a theory. In the profound retirement of La Flêche, cut off from everything but books and Jesuits, Hume composed his *Treatise of Human Nature*, the first of his works. It would be unnecessary to enter at length into the scope and meaning of this book, which made a new step in the ever-turning treadmill of philosophy, and wound another confusing coil of thought round the philosophical observer. In a recent sketch of this series we did our best with unskilful hand to trace for the unscientific reader the progress of mental science (so called) up to the period of Berkeley. Locke had recognised the existence of mind and matter, two grand and universal abstractions, in the world, the one being to us the interpreter of the other. Berkeley, coming after him, boldly denied the abstract existence of matter at all, and affirmed mind, spirit, ideas, to be the only real existences. Hume, taking up the discussion at this point, at once developed and annihilated Berkeley. To him mind itself, the final principle of existence, was, like everything else, a doubt and uncertainty; as incapable of proof as matter, its primeval antagonist. It had been apparent to Descartes that he lived because he thought; but even this consciousness gave to Hume no philosophical conviction of his own existence. He is careful, as we would also be, to discriminate clearly between this philosophical doubt and the instinctive trust of the common man in common circumstances, his sense, beyond all power of

reason to shake, that he himself is, and is surrounded by conditions which must be observed and heeded. It is only in philosophy that he ventures to assert the strange doctrine that mind itself is an existence as improbable as matter. Neither the mighty spectre of a world which seemed to surround him, nor the imagination called mind with which he seemed to comprehend it, could prove themselves. Shreds of fact floating in the air, and here and there caught and secured—incomprehensible sequences and necessities which could not be disputed, yet could not be explained—were all his keen intellect acknowledged in the universe. "Locke," says Mr Lewes, in his *History of Philosophy*, "had shown that all our knowledge was dependent upon experience. Berkeley had shown that we had *no* experience of an external world independent of perception, nor could we have any such experience. He pronounced matter, therefore, to be a figment. Hume took up the line where Berkeley had cast it, and flung it once more into the deep sea, endeavouring to fathom the mysteries of being. Probing deeper in the direction Berkeley had taken, he found that not only was matter a figment, but mind was no less so. If the occult substratum which men had inferred to explain material phenomena could be denied because not founded on experience, so also, said Hume, must we deny the occult substratum, mind, which men had inferred to explain mental phenomena. All that we have any experience of is of impressions and ideas. The substance *of* which

these are supposed to be impressions is occult, is a mere inference; the substance in which these impressions are supposed to be is equally occult, is a mere inference. Matter is but a collection of impressions; mind is but a succession of impressions and ideas. Thus was Berkeley's dogmatic idealism converted into scepticism."

The system of Hume, if that can be called a system which is the pulling down of all systems, and even of the very foundation upon which scientific methods of thought may be built, is still more clearly set forth as follows in his own words :—

"Men," he says, "are carried by a natural instinct or prepossession to repose faith in their senses. When they follow this blind and powerful instinct of nature, they always suppose the *very images* presented to the senses *to be* the external objects, and *never entertain any suspicion that the one are nothing but representations of the other.* But this universal and primary opinion of all men is soon destroyed by the slightest philosophy, which teaches us that nothing can ever be present to the mind but *an image or perception.* So far, then, we are necessitated by *reasoning to contradict the primary instincts of nature,* and to embrace a new system with regard to the evidence of our senses. But here philosophy finds herself extremely embarrassed, when she would obviate the cavils and objections of the sceptics. She can no longer plead the infallible and irresistible instinct of nature, for that led us to quite a different system, which is acknowledged fallible, and even erroneous; and to justify this pretended philosophical system by a chain of clear and convincing argument, or even any appearance of argument, exceeds the power of all human capacity.

"Do you follow the instinct and propensities of nature in assenting to the veracity of the senses? But these lead you to believe that the very *perception or sensible image is the external object*"—(Idealism).

"Do you disclaim this principle in order to embrace a more rational opinion, that the perceptions are only *representations* of something external? You here depart from your natural propensities and more obvious sentiments; and yet are not able to satisfy your reason, which can never find any convincing argument from experience to prove that the perceptions are connected with external objects"—(Scepticism).

"The answer to the question, 'What knowledge have we of an external world?'" says Mr Hill Burton, in his account of the same work, "resolved itself into this: that there were certain impressions and ideas which we supposed to relate to it—further we knew not. When we turn, according to this theory, from the external world, and, looking into ourselves, ask what certainty we have of separate self-existence, we find but a string of impressions and ideas, and we have no means of linking these together into any notion of a continuous existence. Such is that boasted thing, the human intellect, when its elements are searched out by a rigid application of the sceptical philosophy of Hume." And such, we add, were the conclusions of the young man in blooming Anjou, among the quiet of the convent gardens, and under those very cloisters where Descartes, doubting and pondering too, had taken a joyful leap into certain existence from his identification of the process going on in his mind as thought. "I think, therefore I am," the French father of modern philosophy had exclaimed to earth and heaven in a burst of human satisfaction a century before. And now when the hundred years with all its revolutions was accom-

plished, the musing Scot paces the same pavement, revolving the same difficulties, and ends in a conclusion as different as heaven is from earth. He, too, *thought*, devoting his life to that occupation; and in addition possessed as rude a personality as falls to the lot of most men; yet he takes himself to pieces in the silence as if he had been a puzzle, and shakes his head over the many-cornered morsels which he knows he can fit together if he tries. But can all his fitting, all his trying, make one thing of them—an existence, a unity, complete and real? The spectator, even at this distance, cannot look on at the spectacle but with a certain strain and unconscious thrill of sympathy. To be driven to so blank an ending, how dismal must it have been! And all the more that the discovery was made by a young man scarcely six-and-twenty, in the absolute stillness of the silent foreign place, with grass growing in its streets, and its time measured out by the unfamiliar tinkle of the convent bell. He had given up home and youth, and all the profits and attractions of practical life, in order to have time and leisure to complete his theory. And this was the best he could make of it! But the reader may spare his sympathy, and assure himself that David never ate an ounce the less, or felt his personal happiness in the smallest degree diminished by the negation of all things to which his thoughts had brought him. Not his was the nature which admires and envies and longs after a faith it cannot share. He was no amateur or *dilet-*

tante in his ways of thinking, but a born sceptic, clad in impenetrable panoply of spiritual indifference and personal satisfaction, and fortified by good-humour and good digestion against all the fanciful troubles known to man.

The utter solitude in which this work was accomplished is another curious mark of the man's personal identity. He did his work alone, without aid of counsel or sympathy. "While he was framing his metaphysical theory," says Mr Burton, "Hume appears to have permitted no confidential advisers to have access to the workings of his inventive genius; and as little did he take for granted any of the reasonings or opinions of the illustrious dead. Nowhere is there a work of genius more completely authenticated as the produce of the solitary labour of one mind." He tried the edge of his argument, smiling in his sleeve the while, upon his Jesuit companion, and he communicated the *Reasonings on Miracles* to his namesake Henry Home; but the latter is the only instance in which he seems to have sought anything resembling sympathy in his work. And yet he was a social being, fond of the convivialities of the time, not in the least averse to society or shy of ordinary intercourse. Wherever he went he made friends, and kept them, and was warm in all superficial charities. But the soul of the man dwelt apart, not loftily so much as indifferently, having no need of close communion or fellowship with any other soul. A certain unexpressed good-humoured contempt for his kind, mixed,

as such a sentiment often is, with much benevolence and amiable feeling towards them, was no doubt at the bottom of this indifference; but its real origin was in the self-sufficing nature of the man, which demanded no support of human fellowship, but could keep its standing without love, without faith, without sense of dependence, requiring no earthly paradise, hoping for no heaven.

And yet there is a struggle to be recorded, though it is not of any very passionate description. The human nature of the young man sometimes stirs within him notwithstanding all his constitutional calm. Now and then there bursts from him a cry of half-stifled pain. In one of his moments of weakness he gives vent to the following reflections, combating them all the while with his own pitiless common-sense and practical sobriety. His theory itself is not half so curious as the amazing power with which consciously he employs his external existence and senses to smother and make an end of such faint outcries and protestations as may arise in his imperfectly-developed heart.

"The intense view of these manifold contradictions and imperfections in human reason has so wrought upon me," he says, "and heated my brain, that I am ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable and likely than another. Where am I, or what? From what cause do I derive my existence, and to what condition shall I return? Whose favour shall I court, and whose anger must I dread? What beings surround me? and on whom have I any influence, or who have any influence on me? I am confounded with all these questions, and begin to fancy myself in the most

deplorable condition imaginable, environed with the deepest darkness, and utterly deprived of the use of every member and faculty.

"Most fortunately it happens that since Reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation and lively impression of my senses which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game at backgammon, I converse and am merry with my friends: and when, after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any further. Here, then, I find myself absolutely and necessarily determined to live and talk and act like other people in the common affairs of life. . . . I may, nay, I must yield to the current of nature in submitting to my senses and understanding; and in this blind submission I show most perfectly my sceptical disposition and principles; but does it follow that I must strive against the current of nature which leads me to indolence and pleasure? . . . No; if I must be a fool, as all those who reason or believe anything *certainly* are, my follies shall at least be natural and agreeable. . . . These are the sentiments of my spleen and indolence; and, indeed, I must confess that philosophy has nothing to oppose to them, and expects a victory more from the return of a serious good-humoured disposition than from the force of reason and conviction. In all the incidents of life we ought still to preserve our scepticism. If we believe that fire burns or water refreshes, 'tis only because it costs us too much pains to think otherwise; nay, if we are philosophers it ought only to be upon sceptical principles, and from an inclination which we feel to employing ourselves after that manner. When reason is lively and mixes itself with some propensity, it ought to be assented to; where it does not, it never can have any title to operate upon us. At the time, therefore, that I am tired with amusement or company, and have indulged a reverie in my chamber or in a solitary walk by the river-side, I feel my mind all collected within itself, and am naturally *inclined* to carry

my view into all these subjects about which I have met with so many disputes in the course of my reading and conversation."

Surely so strange a piece of personal revelation was never made. The philosopher takes his own intelligence in hand and tunes it like an instrument. When a human sentiment of dismay at the nothingness and desolation with which he has surrounded himself creeps into his mind, he seeks out his friends, is merry, plays his game of backgammon, and lets himself go upon the current of nature which leads to indolence and pleasure, sagaciously calculating upon the period of revulsion which is sure to come. Then, after the desire for pleasure and ease has been satisfied, he indulges in a reverie, or takes a solitary walk, and thus getting back his inclination towards his work, follows it "on sceptical principles" with an inconceivable philosophical calm. And he was but six-and-twenty when he thus regulated the stops of his own being, regarding it, one cannot but feel, with something of the same partial contempt with which he regards the rest of humankind—not disdainfully nor harshly, but good-humouredly, as at best a poor creature capable of little, which it is best not to drive or coerce, but humanely leave to pursue its own way. We know no other writer who has thus condescendingly, apologetically, patronised and humoured himself.

The *Treatise of Human Nature* was published in 1738, on terms not disadvantageous for such a work,

and probably more favourable than a young unknown aspirant in the same strain would find possible now. He had fifty pounds "and twelve bound copies of the book" for one edition of a thousand copies. Its success was not of an encouraging kind. "Never literary attempt was more unfortunate," he says, in his autobiography. "It fell dead-born from the press, without reaching such distinction as even to excite a murmur among the zealots." This, however, seems too strong a statement of the case, though it shows how intensely he had felt the disappointment. His anxiety about its reception was evidently great; he was anxious to leave town, thinking it would "contribute very much to my tranquillity, and might spare me many mortifications to be in the country while the success of the work was doubtful. . . . If you know anybody that is a judge, you would do me a sensible pleasure in engaging him to a serious perusal of the book," he adds, feeling, as so many have done, that to be but known was all he wanted. "The success of my philosophy is but indifferent, if I may judge by the sale of the book, and if I may believe my bookseller," he writes afterwards from Ninewells, where he had taken shelter. "I am now out of humour with myself, but doubt not," he continues, with the doleful playfulness of the disappointed, "in a little time to be only out of humour with the world." Better luck, however, awaited him. In the three or four years following, two other volumes—viz., the third part of the *Treatise of Human Nature*, and the

first volume of *Essays, Moral and Political*—were given to the world; the latter with anxious anonymity. "The work was favourably received," he says, "and soon made me entirely forget my former disappointment." "The Essays are all sold in London," he writes to his friend Henry Home, with natural satisfaction, in the summer of 1742. It was some compensation to him for the mortification of his beginning. He had by this time returned home to his mother, brother, and sister, who still kept house together at Ninewells, an undivided family; and for six or seven years thereafter remained in this retirement, renewing, he tells us, his acquaintance with Greek, making new friends, and beginning various correspondences which went on during his whole life.

This period of quiet was not, however, one of repose or satisfaction with his position. On his return from France he had confessed to his friend Home "a certain shamefacedness I have to appear among you at my years, without having yet a settlement, or so much as attempted any,"—a sentiment which is in the highest degree characteristic of his race and country, and in which every Scotsman will at once concur. To come back without having made any mark in the world, without having even planted his foot on steady ground, and, in short, no better than he went, must have been a humiliation even to a philosopher. "No alteration has happened to my fortune, nor have I taken the least step towards it," he writes to another friend. The success of his Essays no doubt

was consolatory; but even that was no "settlement," and his practical eyes were fully open to the necessity of making a career for himself. He made an attempt to get a professorship in Edinburgh University, but failed; and with some reluctance seems to have adopted the idea of becoming "travelling governor" to a young man of fashion and wealth, could such be found. The appointment which he at length obtained was perhaps the most strange ever conferred upon a philosopher. It was that of companion to the Marquess of Annandale—a young lunatic, full of literary and other frenzies—in whose strange household he found, as might have been expected, a most uncongenial home. His squabbles with the official guardian, and his persistent claim for a sum of money to which he considered himself entitled when at last dismissed from this uncomfortable situation, are of no importance to our story. The mistake seems to have been his acceptance of the position at all; and it certainly affords the observer a very poor idea of the condition of the age, as respects literature and science, to find a man already distinguished in both, and, at the same time, a gentleman of family as good as that of his "patron," consenting to become the butt of a young madman, and the companion of his tedious noisy days. "What a scene is this for a man nourished in philosophy and polite letters to enter into all of a sudden and unprepared!" Hume himself exclaims. "But I ever laugh, whatever happens," he adds, with rueful pleasantry. "I lived with him a twelvemonth,"

is the brief record in the autobiography. "My appointments during that time made a considerable accession to my small fortune." Let us hope these "appointments" somewhat eased the smart inflicted upon his dignity and *amour propre*, though his tenacious grasp upon the last scrap of salary to which he had a right, is not a lofty ending to a very uncomfortable episode in his career.

A more honourable, though at first sight scarcely more suitable, office for a philosopher awaited him. These were the days in which literary men received and expected pensions and honours; and yet it is but too apparent that, except in the rare case of one who could be made Secretary of State, or gentleman usher, there was in reality nothing in the busy world for a man of letters to do. The second employment which fell in his way was that of Secretary to General St Clair, then about setting out on "an expedition, which was at first meant for Canada, but ended in an incursion on the coast of France." "The office is very genteel," he says in a letter; "ten shillings a-day, perquisites, and no expenses. . . . As to myself," he adds to a second correspondent, "my way of life is agreeable; and though it may not be so profitable as I am told, yet so large an army as will be under the General's command in America must certainly render my perquisites very considerable. I have been asked whether I would incline to enter into the service? My answer was, that at my years I could not decently accept of a lower commission

than a company. The only prospect of working this point would be to procure at first a company in an American regiment by the choice of the colonies. But this I build not on, nor indeed am I very fond of it."

The idea of David Hume in a soldier's coat has a curious incongruity, which will make the reader smile. He was by this time thirty-five, and had already begun to acquire the bulk which afterwards distinguished him. The fat philosopher, with his round chubby cheeks and succession of double chins, smooth as a woman's, must have been a curious spectacle in the rakish uniform of the time; and though he was never a soldier, he afterwards wore uniform, and at one time held the rank of aide-de-camp. The expedition was one of those purposeless schoolboy raids which distinguished the time. It landed on the coast of Brittany, fluttered the dovecots in a few helpless seaside villages, and pretended to be about to take the town of L'Orient, "the seat of the East India trade." However, after a siege of six days and much ineffectual artillery, the expedition thought better of it, and turned back again, having "lost only ten men," as it fortunately happened, "by the enemy." In Hume's personal experience, the period was identified by the suicide, in his own quarters, of a Major Forbes, one of his friends—a scene sufficient to make a vivid impression on any mind, but which is noted in Hume's history only by one matter-of-fact record of the occurrence. The account he gives of the entire

expedition is curiously and unintentionally ironical. It was "detained in the Channel until it was too late to go to America," and was then sent "to seek adventures on the coast of France." The general and admiral were both totally unacquainted with the coast —without pilots, guides, or intelligence of any kind, and even without the common maps of the country. They were "entirely ignorant, except from such hearsay information as they had casually picked up at Plymouth," of the strength of the town and garrison they attacked. "There never was on any occasion such an assemblage of ignorant blockheads" as the engineers of the little army. Under such circumstances there was nothing for it but to turn back again: and though Hume says their discomfiture was "without any loss or dishonour," it is a curious example of those deficiencies which have always hampered the British army, and which came to their climax in that uncomfortable age.

The short duration of this employment left the philosopher once more in a state of uncertainty as to his future life. An interval of "idleness and a gay pleasurable life" rewarded him for the brief labours of his campaign. And he thus discusses his prospects in a letter to one of his friends, giving us an incidental glimpse into the new projects which had begun to awaken in his mind:—

"I have an invitation to go over to Flanders with the general, and an offer of table, tent, horses, &c. I must own I have a great curiosity to see a real campaign, but I am deterred by

a view of the expense, and am afraid that, living in a camp, without any character, and without anything to do, would appear ridiculous. Had I any fortune which would give me a prospect of leisure and opportunity to prosecute my *historical projects*, nothing could be more useful to me, and I should pick up more literary knowledge in one campaign, by living in the general's family, and being introduced frequently to the duke's, than most officers could do after many years' service. But to what can all this serve? I am a philosopher, and so, I suppose, must continue.

"I am very uncertain of getting half-pay, from several strange and unexpected accidents, which it would be too tedious to mention; and if I get it not, shall neither be gainer nor loser by the expedition. I believe if I would have begun the world again, I might have returned an officer gratis, and am certain might have been made chaplain to a regiment gratis; but . . . I need say no more. I shall stay a little time in London, to see if anything new will present itself. If not, I shall return very cheerfully to books, leisure, and solitude in the country. An elegant table has not spoiled my relish for sobriety, nor society for study; and frequent disappointments have taught me that nothing need be despaired of, as well as that nothing can be depended on."

Two years later, when the proposed campaign had changed into a peaceful embassage, Hume once more left England in the train of General St Clair; and the interval of retirement, which seems to have been spent at Ninewells, in country quiet and seclusion, had evidently impressed on his mind the conception of his after-work.

"I got an invitation," he repeats, "from General St Clair to attend him in his new employment at the Court of Turin, which I hope will prove an agreeable if not a profitable jaunt for me. I shall have an opportunity of seeing courts and camps; and if I can afterwards be so happy as to attain leisure

and other opportunities, this knowledge may even turn to account to me as a man of letters, which, I confess, has always been the sole object of my ambition. I have long had an intention, in my riper years, of composing some history; and I question not but some greater experience in the operations of the field and the intrigues of the Cabinet will be requisite, in order to enable me to speak with judgment upon these subjects. But, notwithstanding of these flattering ideas of futurity, as well as the present charms of variety, I must confess that I left home with infinite regret, where I had treasured up stores of study and plans of thinking for many years. I am sure I shall not be so happy as I should have been had I prosecuted these. But, in certain situations, a man dares not follow his own judgment, or refuse such offers as these."

His position in this mission was again that of secretary. "I wore the uniform of an officer, and was introduced to these courts as aide-de-camp to the general," he says. We have no space to follow the narrative of his journey, which he sent home to the little domestic party at Ninewells, still united, though the children were growing grey, in that close union which sometimes exists with special force in the family of a widow. There is nothing very remarkable in the narrative, except an ingenuous surprise on the part of the writer to find Germany a habitable country, with some appearance of comfort and wellbeing among its people. "'Tis of this country," he says, "Mr Addison speaks when he calls the people

> 'Nations of slaves by tyranny debased,
> Their Maker's image more than half defaced.'"

"Be assured," he adds, with some warmth, "there is not a finer country in the world, nor are there any signs of poverty among the people. But John Bull's

prejudices are ridiculous as his insolence is intolerable." This last utterance, however, so often repeated since then, arose from no superiority on Hume's part to the prejudices of his race, but from the much more vivacious sentiment of national indignation and disgust at the same John Bull, who was then falling into a frenzy fit of prejudice against everything Scotch, as it was Hume's lot to ascertain by experience. There is also in the account of his tour a sober appreciation of natural beauties not common to the age. The Rhine, the Maine, the broad fertile country, the picturesque villages and palaces (as he curiously entitles the feudal castles of that wonderful district), are all commented on. It is true he finds the houses in quaint Nuremberg to be "old-fashioned and of a grotesque figure," though he allows they are "solid, well built, complete, and cleanly;" but that was the fashion of the time. "I confess I had entertained no such advantageous idea of Germany," he says, with benevolent satisfaction; "and it gives a man of humanity pleasure to see that so considerable a part of mankind as the Germans are in so tolerable a condition." This was written not much more than a hundred years ago, and of a region now as familiar as Bond Street to crowds of people whom Hume would scarcely have admitted within the lowest circle of intelligence. Such strange changes does time alone, without the help of any more startling agent, work upon the external world.

While Hume was at Turin he was seen by Lord

Charlemont, who has left us the following unfavourable, but, we fear, true description of his aspect and appearance:—

"Nature, I believe, never formed any man more unlike his real character than David Hume. The powers of physiognomy were baffled by his countenance; neither could the most skilful in that science pretend to discover the smallest trace of the faculties of his mind in the unmeaning features of his visage. His face was broad and fat, his mouth wide, and without any other expression than that of imbecility. His eyes vacant and spiritless, and the corpulence of his whole person was far better fitted to communicate the idea of a turtle-eating alderman than of a refined philosopher. His speech in English was rendered ridiculous by the broadest Scotch accent; and his French was, if possible, still more laughable; so that wisdom most certainly never disguised herself before in so uncouth a garb. Though now near fifty years old he was healthy and strong; but his health and strength, far from being advantageous to his figure, instead of manly comeliness, had only the appearance of rusticity. His wearing an uniform added greatly to his natural awkwardness, for he wore it like a grocer of the trained-bands. Sinclair was a lieutenant-general, and was sent to the Courts of Vienna and Turin as a military envoy, to see that their quota of troops was furnished by the Austrians and Piedmontese. It was therefore thought necessary that his secretary should appear to be an officer, and Hume was accordingly disguised in scarlet."

While Hume was absent on this mission, his *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding* was published in London. He explains its nature and intention with his usual brevity in his autobiography. "I had always entertained a notion," he says, "that my want of success in publishing the *Treatise of Human Nature* had proceeded more from the manner than the matter, and that I had been guilty of a very usual indiscretion

in going to press too early. I therefore cast the first part of the work anew in the *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*." "His desire was that the *Treatise of Human Nature* should now be treated as a work blotted out of literature, and that the Inquiry should be substituted in its place," Mr Burton tells us; but this was, of course, an impossible hope. In the new form his principles were not altered, but their expression was softened; and, naturally, his opponents were little likely to accept the less pungent and forcible statement. Such new views, or developments of his principle, as he insisted upon more fully in the new volume, did but carry out the conceptions of the other. The doctrine of necessity, as opposed to that of free-will in human action; of the uniformity and sameness of human impulses; and those opinions on miracles which had first occurred to him at La Flêche—all branches of a thoroughly sceptical philosophy—were prominent in the book,—in which, indeed, the theory in respect to miracles was first given to the world. Of these, each, it will be seen, is, if possible, more destructive of any innate dignity in human nature than the other: That men, like atoms of matter, are moved by periodical waves of impulse to do the same thing in a certain severe arithmetical sequence, of which they understand nothing; that the races of humanity bear the same monotonous resemblance to each other as do the stones in a river-bed, dragged up or down by the greater or lesser force of the current; that human

testimony, however enthusiastic or however multiplied, is never to be allowed even a hearing, when it contradicts the regularity of natural laws;—these are the developments of his doctrine, which Hume now gave to the world. At every step as he advanced the great negation grew. The man who, under his teaching, no longer could call his mind his own, or put any faith in its existence, had now to give up his will as well, and recognise himself as a creature

> "Dragged round in earth's diurnal course
> With stocks, and stones, and trees."

Individual character, great aspirations, generous sentiments, were alike denied him. He did but what he could not help doing, thought but as certain vague natural influences moved him, was not to be believed at his highest strain of feeling, or credited with any independent sentiment.

Such was the theory of the philosopher. It did not depress his own mind, so far as there is any evidence on the matter; but he *was* depressed by what would seem on the surface of much less immediate importance. "This piece was at first little more successful than the *Treatise of Human Nature*," he says—a practical disappointment much less easy to bear than any theory. "On my return from Italy I had the mortification to find all England in a ferment on account of Dr Middleton's *Free Inquiry*, while my performance was entirely overlooked and rejected. Such is the force of natural temper, that these disappointments made little or no impression upon me,"

he adds, with, no doubt, partial truth. His mother's death, which happened at the same period, and which he heard of on his return from Italy, probably took the edge off the less severe misfortune. He was found "in the deepest affliction and in a flood of tears," we are told, when the melancholy news was communicated to him; and a good-natured friend improved the occasion with exemplary faithfulness. "My friend, you owe this uncommon grief to having thrown off the principles of religion," said the comforter; "for if you had not, you would have been consoled by the firm belief that this good lady, who was not only the best of mothers but the most pious of Christians, was completely happy in the realms of the just." To which, as the story goes, David replied, "Though I throw out my speculations to entertain the learned and metaphysical world, yet in other things I do not think so differently from the rest of the world as you imagine."

This anecdote, it is evident, however, must be received with caution, for there is no appearance of any such scientific hypocrisy in his life. He was never a virulent, but what is much worse, an indifferent unbeliever. Religion was no necessity to him; he could live without it, and be as virtuous as his neighbours; and he could die without it. In short, it was not, nor did he ever pretend it to be, a want of his soul. Such beings are; and it would be vain to imagine that the unbelief of such a man was necessarily accompanied either by remorse or despair.

In the mean time Hume returned to Ninewells, to his brother and sister, with whom he remained until the marriage of the former in 1751, composing his political and other essays. During this interval of quiet, success came upon him all at once. What his philosophy could not do, his heresy and anti-Christianity did, by rousing the attention of controversialists, who then abounded in the world. "My bookseller informed me that my former publications were beginning to be the subject of conversation, that the sale of them was gradually increasing, and that new editions were demanded. Answers by reverends and right reverends came out two or three in a year; and I found by Dr Warburton's railing that the books were beginning to be esteemed in good society." It was with this comfortable assurance that at last he had made his mark in life, and attained his object, that Hume removed into Edinburgh. His modest pretensions and contented temper, as well, alas! as a state of affairs much different from the present, are indicated in the following account of his means and desires:—

"While interest remains as at present," he writes from Ninewells in the summer of 1751, "I have fifty pounds a-year, a hundred pounds' worth of books, great store of linens and fine clothes, and near a hundred pounds in my pocket, along with order, frugality, a strong spirit of independency, good health, a contented humour, and an unabating love for study. . . . As my sister can join thirty pounds a-year to my stock, and brings an equal love of order and frugality, we doubt not to make our revenues answer."

Thus the little celibate household set itself up in

a "flat" suspended between heaven and Edinburgh, high up in one of the stately houses which still overlook the Earthen Mound, upon an income not exceeding £80 a-year. They had an unrivalled landscape before them; but probably neither the brother nor sister made much account of that; and were surrounded by the cheerful, social, familiar circle of Edinburgh, in which was mingled an unusually large proportion of clergymen. This interval of leisure and work seems to have been one of the happiest periods in Hume's life. He even became frisky in the quiet, and amused himself laboriously with the heaviest of ponderous jokes, about which he writes long anxious letters, more concerned for its success than he ever shows himself about one of his serious works. While at Edinburgh he published the *Political Discourses*, "the only work of mine," he says, "that was successful on the first publication. It was well received abroad and at home. In the same year was published at London my *Inquiry concerning the Principles of Morals*, which, in my own opinion (who ought not to judge on that subject), is of all my writings—historical, philosophical, or literary—incomparably the best. It came unnoticed and unobserved into the world."

Thus, with a certain mild irony, he records his successes and failures, feeling, as many a writer has done before and since, that curious mixture of disdain and satisfaction with which it is but natural to observe the indiscriminating preferences of the crowd. They

let his best drop listlessly from their hands, and conferred a triumph on the secondary production, of which he himself thought so much less highly. The philosopher shrugs his shoulders as he sits at his lofty windows looking over "the gallant Forth," with Miss Katie by his side, and all his kindly friends and correspondents making a little luminous homely circle round him. There were Adam Smith and Ferguson at Glasgow; Blair and Robertson in Edinburgh at his doors; John Home, his namesake, coming in by times from Athelstaneford, with the MS. of his first tragedy in his pocket, which the philosopher thinks may probably not deserve success, since the dramatist admires Shakespeare and has never read Racine! and close by him such an afflicted soul as poor Blacklock the poet, penniless, learned, sensitive, and blind. When Hume, after another unsuccessful attempt upon a vacant chair in the University of Glasgow, accepted the appointment of Librarian to the Advocates' Library, it is said to have been to Blacklock that he devoted the proceeds of his office. It was but £40 a-year, but that was no small addition to the means of a man who was possessed of but £50 *pour tout potage.* "In 1752," he says, "the Faculty of Advocates chose me their librarian, an office from which I received little or no emolument, but which gave me the command of a large library. I then formed the plan of writing the *History of England.*" This great work, as has been seen, had already vaguely visited his dreams for years before; and

when at length he found himself at the very fountain-head of information, with an admirable collection of books at his disposal, and undisturbed quiet to plan and execute as he pleased, he began his undertaking with such care and pains as sometimes even provoke a smile. For it is not a historian's scrupulous exactness as to fact which appears foremost in the history of his work, so much as a curious anxiety—sometimes growing quite painful in its intensity—about the "correctness" of his English, and the careful elimination of every Scotticism from its pages. He writes letter on letter on this subject, and, it is evident, worked with a diligence scarcely comprehensible in these slipshod days, eliminating every doubtful expression from his work. Scotland was then, as his biographer reminds us, a kind of *quasi*-foreign country, with a dialect full, not only of changed words, but of different idioms from those of pure English. All this trouble seemed, according to his own account, to have received but a poor recompense at first. He narrates his renewed disappointment as follows:—

"I commenced with the accession of the house of Stuart, an epoch when, I thought, the misrepresentations of faction began chiefly to take place. I was, I own, sanguine in my expectations of the success of this work. I thought that I was the only historian that had at once neglected present power, interest, and authority, and the cry of popular prejudices; and as the subject was suited to every capacity, I expected proportional applause. But miserable was my disappointment; I was assailed by one cry of reproach, disapprobation, and even detestation; English, Scotch, and Irish, Whig and Tory, Church-

man and sectary, freethinker and religionist, patriot and courtier, united in their rage against the man who had presumed to shed a generous tear for the fate of Charles I. and the Earl of Strafford; and after the first ebullitions of their fury were over, what was still more mortifying, the book seemed to sink into oblivion. Mr Millar told me that in a twelvemonth he sold only forty-five copies of it. I scarcely, indeed, heard of one man in the three kingdoms, considerable for rank or letters, that could endure the book. I must only except the Primate of England, Dr Herring, and the Primate of Ireland, Dr Stone, which seem two odd exceptions. These dignified prelates separately sent me messages not to be discouraged.

"I was, however, I confess, discouraged; and had not the war been at that time breaking out between France and England, I had certainly retired to some provincial town of the former kingdom, have changed my name, and never more have returned to my native country. But as this scheme was not now practicable, and the subsequent volume was considerably advanced, I resolved to pick up courage and to persevere."

Two years later the second volume of the History was published, and "was better received." In another interval of three years the history of the house of Tudor followed, and the work was concluded in 1761. It had thus been about nine years in the composition. And notwithstanding the discouraging character of its beginning, Hume, by the time it was completed, had become one of the most famous and popular authors in Europe. His renown, as will shortly be seen, rapidly crossed the Channel, and was almost greater in France than at home; and profit and honour flowed upon the philosopher. "Notwithstanding," he owns, "this variety of winds and seasons to which my writings had been exposed, they had still been making such advances that the copy-money

given me by the booksellers much exceeded anything formerly known in England: I was become not only independent, but opulent. I retired to my native country of Scotland determined never more to set my foot out of it; and retaining the satisfaction of never having preferred a request to one great man, or even making advances of friendship to any of them. As I was now turned of fifty, I thought of passing all my life in this philosophical manner."

This expectation, however, was not realised. His life, so far as the excitement of popular adoration and applause went, and all the show and outward apparel of greatness, was indeed only about to begin.

But before he shoots away a new star into the firmament of French fashion, there is a certain pleasure in watching the bulky, ponderous philosopher, with his clumsy jokes and friendly moderate enthusiasms. A certain rustic minister, called Wilkie, had composed a poem professing to be a translation of a supposed early production of Homer, and called the Epigoniad, which Hume, with outbursts of praise, declares to be the second epic poem in our language. Of Home's *Douglas* he writes that "I am persuaded it will be esteemed the best, and by French critics the only, tragedy of our language!" His interest in Robertson's History, which he might even have been excused for thinking a rival of his own, is lively and honest, and he seems to have omitted no opportunity of helping the writer forward. Adam Smith's first work, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, a

book also to some extent a rival of his own, he hails with the same anxious plaudits, spreading its fame wherever he goes. And no man ever took up more contentedly the *rôle* of comfortable obscurity. When anticipating a change of residence to London, he wrote to his friend Dr Clephane of his desire to secure "a room in a decent, sober family, who would not be averse to receive a sober, discreet, virtuous, regular, quiet, good-natured man of a bad character;" and informed the doctor that "I shall then be able to spend £150 a-year." Never was a more friendly, unaffected, good-humoured, self-denying, self-indulgent soul. He is so kindly and so friendly that one scarcely likes to note how characteristic of a nature never moved to any supreme passion or effort, or deeply acted upon by anything outside himself, is all this homely amiable submission to the subdued colours and humdrum routine of declining life. He accepts, nay, even forestalls it, liking nothing better than the loose-robed comfort of the chimney-corner, the elephantine pointless jokes, the subdued pleasurable sentiments of a life from which avowedly all the disturbing vigour and restlessness of youth has departed. Comfort was sweet to him, and he had it. What could such a man desire more?

The change from this quiet scene to the brilliant Court of France, with all its fine ladies and fine gentlemen, its princes and wits and *savans*, precipitating themselves at the feet of the good-humoured but surprised philosopher, is the strangest that can be

conceived. It was in the year 1763, when Hume was fifty-two, and perfectly disposed to give himself over to the quietude of age, that this extraordinary revolution occurred in his life. The Marquess of Hertford had been appointed ambassador to France, and by some strange impulse of public spirit, or other unlikely motive, fixed upon Hume, with whom he was not even acquainted, to be his secretary. The invitation was so startling that the philosopher hesitated; but finally moved by the thought that he had resolved to "give up his future life to amusements," and attracted by the charms of French society, which he had always admired, at length decided upon accepting it. "The decorum and piety of Lord Hertford occasioned men to wonder," says Horace Walpole, "when, in the room of Bunbury, he chose for his secretary the celebrated freethinker David Hume, totally unknown to him; but this was the effect of recommendations from other Scots who had much weight with Lord and Lady Hertford." Hume himself, however, informs us that "the idea first came into my patron's head without the suggestion of any one mortal." The effect of the patronage of so orthodox a man seems to have had the immediate effect of rehabilitating the unbelieving philosopher. "I was now a person clean and white as the driven snow; and were I to be proposed for the see of Lambeth, no objection could henceforth be made to me," he says, with a chuckle of amusement and humorous satisfaction. Yet his anticipations were not always

of a pleasurable character. "I repine at my loss of ease, and leisure, and retirement, and independence," he says; "and it is not without a sigh I look backwards, nor without reluctance that I cast my eye forwards." These melancholy thoughts, however, disappeared when he found himself in the gayer atmosphere of France, and suddenly discovered that he was the fashion, and found all the world at his feet. He had been prepared for the fact of his own popularity to some mild extent. "No author ever yet attained to that degree of reputation in his own lifetime that you are now in possession of at Paris," Lord Elibank had written to him in the spring before his arrival there. "When you have occasion to see our friend David Hume," writes another of his acquaintances, "tell him that he is so much worshipped here that he must be void of all passion if he does not immediately take post for Paris." Helvetius also conveys to him the same flattering announcement; and so, in still softer strains, does Madame de Boufflers, whose correspondence with him had commenced two years before. He had scarcely arrived when he was overwhelmed by evidences of this unbounded popularity. Ten days after he reached France, he wrote to Adam Smith: "I have been three days at Paris and two at Fontainebleau, and have everywhere met with the most extraordinary honours which the most exorbitant vanity could wish or desire. The compliments of dukes and marshals of France, and foreign ambassadors, go for nothing with me at present. I retain a

relish for no kind of flattery but that which comes from the ladies." "During the two last days, in particular," he adds, "I have *suffered* (the expression is not improper) as much flattery as almost any man has ever done in the same time." He protests that "it makes no difference to him;" but it is evident that Hume was far from displeased by these demonstrations of regard. It is true that by times he gives vent to an exclamation of weariness. "I wish, twice or thrice a-day, for my easy-chair and my retreat in James's Court!" but yet the manner in which he dwells upon all the compliments made to him, is not that of a man dissatisfied or annoyed by the sweetnesses of his life. Here is a little sketch, made by his own hand, from which it may be perceived how easily a man can habituate himself to any amount of worship:—

"Do you ask me about my course of life? I can only say that I eat nothing but ambrosia, drink nothing but nectar, breathe nothing but incense, and tread on nothing but flowers! Every man I meet, and still more every lady, would think they were wanting in the most indispensable duty if they did not make a long harangue in my praise. What happened last week when I had the honour of being presented to the Dauphin's children at Versailles is one of the most curious scenes I ever passed through. The Duc de B., the eldest—a boy of ten years old—stepped forth and told me how many friends and admirers I had in this country, and that he reckoned himself among the number, from the pleasure he had received in reading many passages in my works. When he had finished, his brother, the Count de P., who is two years younger, began his discourse, and informed me that I had been long and impatiently expected in France, and that he himself soon expected to have great

satisfaction from the reading of my fine history. But what is more curious, I was carried then to the Count d'A., who is but four years of age. I heard him mumble something, which, though he had forgot in the way, I conjectured, from some scattered words, to have been also a panegyric dictated to him. . . .

"All this attention and panegyric was at first offensive to me; but now it sits more easy. I have recovered in some measure the use of the language, and am falling into friendships that are very agreeable—much more so than silly distant admiration. They now begin to banter me, and tell droll stories of me which they have either observed themselves or heard from others; so that you see I am beginning to be at home. It is probable that this place will long be my home. I feel little inclination to the factious barbarians of London; and have ever desired to remain in the place where I am planted. How much more so when it is the best place in the world? I could here live in great abundance on the half of my income; for there is no place where money is so little requisite to a man who is distinguished either by his birth or personal qualities. . . . However, I cannot help observing on what a different footing learning and the learned are here from what they are among the factious barbarians above mentioned."

Contemporary French writers are not wanting to confirm these wonderful tales, with touches at the same time of gentle pleasantry at the *gros philosophe Ecossais*," "*grand et gros historiographe d'Angleterre.*"

"C'est un excellent homme que David Hume," says Grimm; "il est naturellement serein, il entend finement, et quelquefois avec sel, quoiqu'il parle peu; mais il est lourd, il n'a ni chaleur ni grace, ni agrément dans l'esprit, ni rien qui soit propre à s'allier au ramage de ces charmantes petites machines qu'on appelle jolies femmes." Another amusing glimpse shows him playing elephantine pranks for the amusement of the same ravishing but difficult audience in one of the dramatic amuse-

ments of the time, in which "on lui avait destiné le rôle d'un sultan assis entre deux esclaves employant toute son eloquence pour s'en faire aimer; les trouvant inexorables il devait chercher le sujet de leur peines et de leur résistance: on le place sur un sopha entre les deux plus jolies femmes de Paris, il les regarde attentivement, il se frappe le ventre et les genoux à plusieurs reprises et ne trouve jamais autre chose à les dire que, '*Eh bien—mes demoiselles—eh bien—vous voilà donc—eh bien, vous voilà—vous voilà ici?*' Cette phrase dura un quart d'heure sans qu'il pût en sortir. Une d'elles se leva d'impatience. 'Ah,' dit-elle, 'je m'en étais bien doutée—cet homme n'est bon qu'à manger du veau!' Depuis ce temps il est relégué au rôle de spectateur, et n'en est pas moins fêté et cajolé."

It was nearly two years after his arrival in Paris and discharge of all the duties of the secretaryship before Hume really obtained the situation and its emoluments. "The matter is concluded and the king has given his consent," he writes in June 1765, after many exhortations to his friends to aid him, and vicissitudes of fear and hope; "so that, in spite of Atheism and Deism, of Whiggism and Toryism, of Scotticism and Philosophy, I am now possessed of an office of credit, and of £1200 a-year." However, this was but a momentary gleam of prosperity. A month had scarcely passed before the home administration changed, Lord Hertford was recalled, and Hume's good fortune became a thing of the past. For several months he remained Chargé d'Affaires in Paris until the new ambassador arrived, and finally left France in the beginning of 1766, not much more certain of any future provision than he had been at his outset. A pension of £400 a-year

was, however, eventually settled upon him, and thus his diplomatic career came to a close.

The curious episode of his connection with Rousseau need not be here entered upon in detail. After making the Continent too hot to hold him, the great sentimentalist made what he was pleased to call a flight from the secret yet enthusiastic worship of Paris, under the protection of Hume when he returned to England. Everything that our philosopher could do to promote the comfort of his guest and find a suitable refuge for him was, it is evident, done with zeal and almost devotion, and called forth Rousseau's intensest gratitude, which was often displayed in a way which the sober Scotsman must have found somewhat embarrassing. On one occasion when they had partially quarrelled over a very small matter, Hume records: "After passing near an hour in this ill-humour, he rose up and took a turn about the room. But judge of my surprise when he sat down suddenly on my knee, threw his hands about my neck, kissed me with the greatest warmth, and bedewing all my face with tears, exclaimed — 'Is it possible you can ever forgive me, my dear friend?' . . . I hope you have not so bad an opinion of me as to think I was not melted on this occasion. I assure you I kissed him and embraced him twenty times with a plentiful effusion of tears. I think no scene in my life was ever more affecting." We fear the reader will be more disposed to smile than to weep at the grotesque picture of the little bearded Swiss

on the fat knees of *le gros philosophe Ecossais*, and of the mutual embracing which followed. This sweet accord, however, was far from permanent. After Hume had procured him a pension, and given himself endless trouble in establishing him according to his inclinations, Rousseau suddenly turned upon him with the most causeless and meaningless insults. The quarrel, with the letters it drew forth on both sides, was made into a pamphlet, and published in France under the advice of Hume's friends there. *Cette sotte bête appelée le public* was thus called in to judge the matter; and so far Hume's wrongs may be said to have been fully avenged.

While this quarrel was going on, Hume received his last public appointment as Under-Secretary of State under General Conway, the brother of Lord Hertford. Once more he speaks as if he grudged a little the employment which kept him from retiring to his beloved leisure. He had plenty of money; and with his usual curious contemptuous regard for himself "was desirous," he says, "of trying what superfluity could produce, as I had formerly made an experiment of a competency." This experiment, however, was postponed for a year or two, and in the mean time his life is thus described:—

"My way of life here is very uniform, and by no means disagreeable. I pass all the forenoon in the secretary's house, from ten till three, when there arrive, from time to time, messengers that bring me all the secrets of the kingdom, and, indeed, of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. I am seldom hurried; but have leisure at intervals to take up a book, or

write a private letter, or converse with any friend that may call for me; and from dinner to bedtime is all my own. . . . I only shall not regret when my duty is over; because, to me, the situation can lead to nothing, at least in all probability; and reading, and sauntering, and lounging, and dosing—which I call thinking—is my supreme happiness,—I mean my full contentment."

Thus the man's identity and his philosophy go together through every change in his existence. He does not pretend to feel any satisfaction in the thought of doing his duty by his country, though no doubt he did it according to his lights. The same curious limit which nature seems to have built around him, betrays itself in matters which might have been supposed of the strongest personal interest. Even in respect to correcting the imperfections of his History, he asks, "Were it not an amusement, to what purpose would it serve, since I shall certainly never live to see a new edition?" It would appear that he felt no need even of that terrestrial immortality which tempts the most humble of mortal creatures. He held office not more than three years, and thus describes his retirement from public life, and entrance into the full ease and luxury of which he wanted to make experiment, for the rest of his existence :—

"I returned to Edinburgh in 1769, very opulent (for I possessed a revenue of £1000 a-year), healthy, and, though somewhat stricken in years, with the prospect of enjoying long my ease, and of seeing the increase of my reputation."

"I had taken one of Allan Ramsay's houses," he adds,—and everybody who has ever seen Edinburgh,

and remembers the glorious position of Ramsay Gardens, on a line with the Castle, and commanding all the country round ; the Forth, and distant Fife lying blue, with its Laws and Lomonds, on the horizon, will approve of his selection. But the situation was thought too cold, and he retired eventually to his old habitation in James's Court, which commanded the same fine prospect ; though, perhaps, its size and pretensions, which had suited the homely philosopher setting up an establishment on £80 a-year, might scarcely answer all the requirements of the pensioned diplomatist and statesman with £1100 a-year to spend. "I am glad to have come within sight of you, and to have a view of Kirkcaldy from my windows," he writes to Adam Smith, surely with some fresh sense of pleasure in the familiar landscape thus restored to him after all his wanderings. "I have been settled here two months," he writes a little later, "and am here body and soul, without casting the least thought of regret to London, or even to Paris. I live still, and must for a twelvemonth, in my old house in James's Court, which is very cheerful, and even elegant, but too small to display my great talent for cookery, the science to which I intend to addict the remaining years of my life. I have just now lying on the table before me a receipt for making *soupe à la reine*, copied with my own hand : for beef and cabbage—a charming dish—and old mutton, and cold lamb, nobody excels me. I make, also, sheep-head broth in a manner that Mr Keith speaks

of it for eight days after, and the Duc de Nivernois would bind himself apprentice to my lass to learn it." In conjunction with his cookery he took to building, and made himself a house, like so many men, to die in. It was the commencement of the street leading southwards from St Andrew Square to Princes Street, and certainly was far from an improvement, in point of position, upon the mount of vision he had left. Before the new street had received any name, "a witty young lady chalked on the wall the words *St David's Street.*" Hume's *lass*, judging that it was not meant in honour or reverence, ran into the house much excited to tell her master how he was made game of, — "Never mind, lassie," he said, "many a better man has been made a saint of before." Perhaps there are few people, even among those who traverse the locality daily, who are aware that St David Street, still existing in Edinburgh, thus commemorates, not Bruce's royal successor, but the unsaintly David, the *gros drôle*, who won fame without caring for it, and desired no grace of remembrance even among his townsmen. The many-trodden stony street, careless as his own soul of the thousand interests, sorrows, and loves that move about it, is the sceptic's fitting shrine.

And yet one cannot look at the calm of his declining years without a certain sympathy. He is so cheerful, so easy, so contented with himself and everything about him; so ready to interest himself in other people—to advise, and applaud, and

good-humouredly criticise; so free from all personal anxiety about his own health or future prospects. There are, no doubt, many who will think that these last were more terrible than consolatory. But we have succeeded very poorly in placing Hume before them if they do not perceive that such was his nature, and that solicitude about the future existence was a matter entirely impossible to him. He had enjoyed almost everything that life could give to such a man. He had never in his life loved enough or sorrowed enough to feel any want of that compensating hereafter to which the most of us poor mortals turn longing eyes. His nature was complete without that postscript in which we put so pathetic a trust. He had nobody whom his heart refused to part with either waiting for him on the other side or retaining him on this. There would seem to be, let us say it with reverence, no sufficient reason why such a soul should not be gently extinguished on its exit from a world in which it had found all it desired—not puffed out like a half-burned candle, leaving chill suggestions of a might-have-been, but allowed to die down in its socket, and consume itself away and be no longer. Such an end would have had no terrors for Hume—would, indeed, have been a characteristic conclusion. All along it had been in his nature. It is the heart, and not the intellect, which insists upon living, and it was intellect which was Hume's chief possession. So far as the other part of him went, the body,

which had attained such unwieldy proportions, he had made that very comfortable in his day. He had given it all it desired—food, and wine, and employment, and exercise, and rest—and his accounts were very well balanced so far as that went. And as for his mind, it surveyed all things, and measured the pain and pleasure, the good and evil chances, the long succession of mortal existence, in which it found so little spontaneous impulse, so much monotonous pendulum work of necessity, one race following another through the world; and, doubtless, having thus fathomed the secrets of existence, felt no need of further experience, or of a new sphere to enter upon. The ordinary observer looks on with amaze at a spectacle which contradicts so many theories. The quiet death-bed, the cheerful spirit, the courageous steadfast composure with which the sceptic went through those last lingering days, are a mystery to us. But such problems, like most other mysteries in heaven and earth, must find solution elsewhere than here.

There are one or two points, however, which we may pause to note, in which the Sceptic's nature and philosophy baffle, as we have already said, even the keenness of his intellect, and deprive him of a power of perception which men, probably less gifted than himself, possess by intuition. Such an example shows us how genius itself may strike against the limits of nature, and be stopped short by them. For instance, in all his much intercourse with France,

and the love he had for it, it never seems to have been apparent to Hume, as it was to Chesterfield, a much inferior thinker, that everything around was darkening towards some great catastrophe. Neither, though he lived in his youth in the very heart of the country, and must have seen many such scenes of peasant oppression and distress as those which took the very power of speech from Berkeley, does he ever seem to have been impressed by, or even to have noticed them; which is a curious evidence of that supreme want of sympathy with his race which distinguished his mind, though in external particulars it was constantly concealed by a certain natural amiability and inclination to be friendly and helpful. This deficiency neutralised at once his sagacious mind, his political knowledge, and his genius. He knew human nature so little, even while knowing it so much, that the signs of the times were a sealed book to him. There is another very notable instance in which the same want of sympathy leads him to advise a transgression of one of the first principles of honour, an accusation which no doubt would have much surprised him. A young clergyman, whose mind seems to have been unsettled by Hume's works, applied to him, through his friend Colonel Edmonstone, for advice as to what he should do; that is, whether or not he should remain in the Church. The philosopher answers, without apparently a moment's doubt or hesitation. "It is putting too great a respect on the vulgar," he says,

"and on their superstitions, to pique one's self on sincerity with regard to them. Did ever one make it a point to speak truth to children or madmen? If the thing was worthy of being treated gravely, I should tell him that the Pythian oracle, with the approbation of Xenophon, advised every one to worship the gods, νομῳ πολεως. I wish it were still in my power to be a hypocrite in this particular. The common duties of society usually require it, and the ecclesiastical profession only adds a little more to an innocent dissimulation, or rather simulation, without which it is impossible to pass through the world." Thus his incapacity to understand the heights and depths of the soul, his indifference to his race, and the contempt for it which is involved in all his philosophy, leads a man, otherwise honest and straightforward, to a sophistry worse than anything fabled of a Jesuit, and to direct encouragement of the worst and most debasing of all falsehoods.

But when we return to the old man dying placidly in his new Edinburgh house, we forget how superficial are his affections, and how mortal his soul. Here is one of the last letters he ever wrote, than which it would be impossible to produce anything more quietly dignified or affecting. There is a certain Socratic calm of anticipation in it which moves the spectator to uncover and stand aside as in the presence of a great being, be its nature what it may:—

"DEAR BROTHER,—Dr Black tells me plainly, like a man of sense, that I shall die soon, which was no disagreeable news

to me. He says I shall die of weakness and inanition, and perhaps give little or no warning. But though I be growing sensibly weaker every day, this period seems not to be approaching; and I shall have time enough to improve you and to desire your company, which will be very agreeable to me. But at this time your presence is necessary at Ninewells to settle Josey and comfort his mother. Davie will be also very useful to you. I am much pleased with his tenderness and friendship. I beg therefore that neither he nor you may set out; and as the communication between us is open and frequent, I promise to give you timely information."

Never Christian fronted death more bravely, nor with a more peaceful calm.

He died on the 25th August 1776, a fortnight after writing the above letter, at the age of sixty-five, leaving behind him the highest philosophical reputation, a host of kind and friendly recollections, and abundance of vulgar condemnation. Perhaps it is one of the weaknesses of this age that it is unable to condemn with the frank and hearty vigour of its forefathers. We cannot blame Hume for his utter indifference to the spiritual consolations, hopes, and blessings of which his limited spiritual nature could form little conception and felt no need. Nor can we even feel that imperfection in his existence which strikes us in almost all the lives which have been brought prominently before the world. There seems nothing left to be made up to him, no injustice to set right, no disappointment to soothe, no lost to restore. He had his immortality, his consolations, his happiness, such as it was, within the limits of this world. The imagination declines to follow him into

any other. Such a man with such a life may be permitted—so far as our judgment of him is concerned—in a certain solemn heathen calm and stillness of atmosphere, hushed but not discouraged by the thought, to end and die.

XII

THE PAINTER

THE PAINTER.

THERE are few more curious effects in history than that which is produced by the transference of the work and influence properly belonging to one man into the hands of another. The very fact that such a transfer is possible, indicates a certain confusion and tumult in the elements of life. Now and then there has come a moment when some simple citizen, without training for government, has been driven by failure of legitimate rulers and stress of necessity and genius to the head of affairs; and such a wonderful reversal of ordinary law has been the last evidence—at once result and cause—of those convulsions which transform a world. The emergency which converts a calm civilian into a great general may be less momentous, but its character is the same; it marks the moment when public danger is so great that whosoever can must snatch at the reins and hold them, standing upon no punctilio. To instance such prodigies as Cromwell or Buonaparte, or even Clive,

in illustration of the singular office of the Painter Moralist, would be, no doubt, magniloquent and overstrained; and yet there is something in the one phenomenon which recalls the other. William Hogarth was born in an age which wanted moral teaching above all other needs. The century was ill at ease, as most centuries are. No doubt it would have been the better for rulers of firmer grasp and generals of higher skill and courage; but yet political conflict was not its most marked peculiarity, which is a bold statement to make, considering all the political struggles of the time. What ailed it most, however, was Vice, a perennial human disease which now and then comes, like all other diseases, to a climax, at which something must be done to kill or cure. Wickedness had got to be rampant in those days; the very thoughts of the virtuous were tinctured in spite of themselves by the phraseology and images of pollution. Innocence itself spoke words and was cognisant of facts which even the unabashed hide under decent veils nowadays. To stay this tide of corruption, violent and strange and unnatural means had to be resorted to. The humdrum domestic goodness of the time had neither elevation nor impulse of its own to move the crowd. It might be the salt of the world preserving, but it was not the leaven transforming that mass of evil. There were teachers enough to instruct the race in the legitimate way, but that calm method was not enough for the emergency. And even Wesley, great apostle and

reformer of the age, the messenger of the Unseen to a nation which had almost forgotten it possessed a soul, did not answer all the exigencies of the moment. There is at all times a solid block of humanity which resists all spiritual agency, and is only to be worked upon by matter-of-fact arguments and reasoning which is carnal and of the earth. When the heavenly message was proclaimed to its full, there was still room for another message, less elevated, less noble, but yet efficacious in its way. Had a statesman delivered it in power, or a philosopher out of the depths of his study and cogitation, there would have been a natural fitness in the office. Or had it fallen into the hands of a great writer, there would have been no wonder, but only an instantaneous sense of suitability. But what had Art to do with so grave a public necessity? Of all regions from which help could come this was the most hopeless. In every other occupation demanding genius the English mind has showed itself able to compete with all comers. Poetry, philosophy, the eloquence of the orator and of the author, have reached in this island heights as splendid as have been possible to any race or language; but in England Art has never been heroic. At the period we refer to it scarcely existed save as an exotic; but, even down to our own days, how much have false sentiment, mock grandeur, bathos in every shape, prevailed in its hands over all higher motives! Those familiarities of art which now delight the British public had not then come into

being: where we have the domestic our grandfathers had the mythological; and notwithstanding that Sir Joshua Reynolds was already born, and that a really national school of painting was about to come into being, by which we have profited for a hundred years, we have never got much further—to our sorrow be it said. A certain nobility and sweetness in the art of portrait-painting, most conspicuous in him, its first great professor—a certain sympathy for nature in the form of landscape, and now and then by rare intervals an elevating step out of the namby-pamby of domestic sentimentalism into the universally true of human emotion, have been possible to English art; but thoughts that breathe and lines that burn have never been given to it. And amid the Thornhills and Kents and Highmores of its first beginning, how was it to be expected that a man should rise with a message in him to the world, then rolling so fast on its downward way?

But this unlikely thing was what really happened. A prophet after his fashion, with a commission to deliver—urgent, violent, discourteous, sometimes terrible—rose all at once from among the painters of ceilings and manufacturers of goddesses. That vice was hideous, abominable, impossible — abominable and hideous by the way, but of all things impossible —not to be—the great embodied curse and scourge and destroyer — was the burden of this prophetic deliverance, as indeed it has been the burden of most prophets from the earliest record. It is as difficult

to answer the question why Hogarth should have been selected to say this, as it is to determine why the first Napoleon, and not another, had the work of the conqueror thrust into his hands. Hogarth's mission was not spiritual; rather it is in its awful prose, in its dread matter of fact and historical precision, that its power rests. Heaven had little enough to do with the matter. The prophet in this instance was a man of earth, with no special celestial meaning in him; quick-sighted, shrewd, and practical; not so much shocked by the evil round him as practically convinced of the necessity of putting a stop to it in the interests of the world. The nauseous details on which he dwells without reluctance—almost, indeed, with a kind of pleasure—show that it was no ideal of purity which moved him. He was used to life's most crowded ways, and was not squeamish about what he met there. He was so calm and impartial, and free of any fantastic delicacy, that now and then the grim fun of a situation struck him, and moved him to momentary laughter. But his sense above and through all was, that this could not be. It must not be. Nature and life and every law of earth pronounced against it. That vice is progressive, like every other agency which acts on human nature; that it goes from worse to worse with an infallible certainty; that suffering accompanies it as an equally infallible consequence; that it carries with it misery, squalor, sickness, death, and destruction; that the end is involved in the beginning as in a mathematical diagram,

and that none escape,—this is what Hogarth had to teach to his world. To say that his world often misunderstood him, and took his tragedy for farce, and his awful warning for an amusing fable, is no lessening of his work. Neither is it anything against the reality of his commission that he was moved by hosts of secondary motives, bulking in his own eyes more largely perhaps than the grander inspiration which he obeyed without quite knowing that he did so. So Ezekiel, did one but know it, might have had private and personal reasons known to his contemporaries, and certain special personages in his mind's eye, when he fulminated forth his passionate charges against his nation and his age. The painter, we may say, saw a new opening for his powers, which were not trained to the height of the nymphs and goddesses; and the vulgar admiration of the public was caught by an ideal wretch whom it identified with one of the well-known Molls or Kates of the time. The meaner truth is not inconsistent with the greater. By a process curiously possible to our complicated human faculties, it *was* Moll or Kate whom Hogarth painted; and yet at the same time it was Vice treading the miserable tragic way to destruction. The public grinned, lewd, sympathetic, admiring; and yet, in the very midst of its brutal amusement caught the arrow in its heart.

The man to whom this curious office belonged—the only prophet-painter ever produced, so far as we are aware, either in England or elsewhere—was not

a man whose character would have made such an office probable. Hogarth was born in London in November 1697, of an honest, obscure family. His father appears to have had some pretensions to literature. "My father's pen," he says, "like that of many other authors, did not enable him to do more than put me in the way of shifting for myself." But this claim seems to have had but slender foundation, as the elder Hogarth is described as a corrector of the press and schoolmaster. The painter describes himself as showing an early inclination towards the art in which he was afterwards so famous. "An early access to a neighbouring painter drew my attention," he says, "from play; and I was at every possible opportunity employed in making drawings. . . . My exercises when at school were more remarkable for the ornaments that adorned them than for the exercise itself. In the former I soon found that blockheads with better memories could much surpass me, but for the latter I was particularly distinguished." This curious little indication of youthful self-opinion and shrewd insight into the possibilities of the future, though perhaps somewhat grandly expressed, is clear enough as to the homely beginning of the ladder by which he ascended. The painter referred to was, no doubt, a house-painter; and it must have been the scrolls and ingenious borders, the festooned ribbons and groups of lutes and viols and music-books, which captivated the boy's imagination. "I soon learned to draw the alphabet with great correctness," he

adds, evidently with a reminiscence of sign-posts. These studies very naturally led to a similar but more refined trade. Hogarth was apprenticed to a silver-plate engraver, and spent the rest of his young life in designing coats-of-arms and other ornamentation for the silver tankards and heavy table-furniture of the age.

Natural as this transition would seem to have been, our artist, with a curious little attempt at the elevation of his surroundings, represents himself as having chosen so homely a career, because "I had before my eyes the precarious situation of men of classical education. . . . It was therefore very conformable to my own wishes," he adds, "that I was taken from school and served a long apprenticeship." But the engraving of silver plate did not long satisfy the ambitious boy. He "found it in every respect too limited;" and at twenty his "utmost ambition" was to engrave on copper. English art was at this period in its dawn; and for the first time an English painter had taken brush in hand to emulate and continue the achievements of Verrio and La Guerre. As it happened, it was Sir James Thornhill, the future father-in-law of Hogarth, who thus made himself visible upon the walls and roofs, in nymphs as well developed and a heaven as blue as that which had made the foreigner magnificent; and no doubt a new impulse was given to all English lads with a taste for the pencil by this first leap into eminence of "native talent." "The paintings of St Paul's Cathedral and

Greenwich Hospital, which were at that time going on, ran in my head," says Hogarth. In St Paul's it was not nymphs but apostles which were the subjects; and in accordance with the change of sentiment, the brilliant azure which suited mythology sank into a truly national drab; but the pictures, sacred and profane, were of about the same calibre. They were paid for by a munificent British nation at the cost of forty shillings a square yard. But all the same, they stimulated young Hogarth as he sat engraving heraldic monsters upon silver, and pondering what he should do to make himself famous. Even at this moment of exuberant hope it does not seem to have occurred to him that he too might paint nymphs. Very sensible, and at the same time very daring and original, were the cogitations which passed through the young man's mind as he laboured at his griffins. From the beginning the stamp of the practical was on all his imaginations; no dreams of study, such as would seem to come naturally to a young artist, moved his sober mind. He worked and he pondered, rejecting everything that was impossible, confining himself within the bounds of probability with the most curious sobriety and reasonableness. Perhaps only the exercise of an actual handicraft round which all his ponderings were strung could have kept the balance so straight between the imaginative and the practical; but no doubt the mental constitution of the young thinker is the first thing to be taken into consideration. Even in the heat of his musings he

never forgets that he himself is no self-denying enthusiast, but "one who loved his pleasure;" and makes his plans accordingly, laying out for himself no sketch of impossible devotion to art or pursuit of abstract excellence, but such a sober compromise between ambition and possibility as the reasonable lad could feel was within his powers of execution. A shrewd practical mind working under such conditions, with fire enough to carry it on to its aim, and yet not enthusiasm enough to blind it to its inevitable deficiencies, is the natural inventor of new methods of study and short cuts to learning. Hogarth, over his work, feeling himself capable of better things, eager for fame and success and all their practical accompaniments, and wisely reflecting "that the time necessary to learn in the usual mode would leave no room to spare for the common enjoyments of life"—a sacrifice which he does not feel inclined to make—finds nothing left for it but to consider "whether a shorter road than that usually travelled was not to be found." The progress of his thoughts on this point he records as follows:—

"The early part of my life had been employed in a business rather detrimental than advantageous to those branches of the art which I wished to pursue and have since professed. I had learned by practice to copy with tolerable exactness in the usual way; but it occurred to me that there were many disadvantages attending this method of study—as having faulty originals, &c.; and even when the pictures or prints to be imitated were from the best masters, it was little more than pouring water out of one vessel into another. Drawing in an academy, though it should be after the life, will not make a student an artist;

for as the eye is often taken from the original to draw a bit at a time, it is possible he may know no more of what he has been copying, when his work is finished, than he did before it was begun. . . . A dull transcriber who in copying Milton's *Paradise Lost* hath not omitted a line, has almost as much right to be compared to Milton as an exact copier of a fine picture by Rubens hath to be compared to Rubens. . . . What is written may be line for line the same with the original; but it is not probable that this will often be the case with the copied figure—frequently far from it. Yet the performer will be much more likely to retain a recollection of his own imperfect work than of the original from which he took it. More reasons not necessary to enumerate struck me as strong objections to this practice, and led me to wish that I could find the shorter path—fix forms and characters in my mind, and instead of copying the lines, try to read the language, and if possible find the grammar of the art, by bringing into one focus the various observations I had made, and then trying by my power on the canvas how far my plan enabled me to combine and apply them to practice. For this purpose I considered what various ways and to what different purposes the memory might be applied, and fell upon one which I found most suitable to my situation and idle disposition—laying it down first as an axiom that he who could by any means acquire and retain in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw, would have as clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who can write freely hath of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet and their infinite combinations (each of these being composed of lines), and would consequently be an accurate designer. This I thought my only chance for eminence. . . . I therefore endeavoured to habituate myself to the exercise of a sort of technical memory, and by repeating in my own mind the parts of which objects were composed, I could by degrees combine and put them down with my pencil. Thus, with all the drawbacks which resulted from the circumstances I have mentioned, I had one material advantage over my competitors—viz., the early habit I had thus acquired of retaining in my mind's eye, without coldly copying it on the spot, whatever I

intended to imitate. . . . My pleasures and my studies thus going hand in hand, the most striking objects that presented themselves, either comic or tragic, made the strongest impression on my mind. . . . Instead of burdening the memory with musty rules, or tiring the eyes with copying dry and damaged pictures, I have ever found studying from nature the shortest and safest way of attaining knowledge in my art."

The kind of study of nature which Hogarth thus adopted was not, however, the study promoted or recommended by schools of art. "Sometimes, but too seldom, I took the life," he says, "for correcting the parts I had not perfectly enough remembered." "The life" as represented by an academic model was almost as little in his way as copying "dry or damaged pictures." It was nature as it abounded in the streets, in the alehouses, wherever the jovial, obstinate, self-opinionated young fellow passed, that he pursued, his pleasures and studies going hand in hand. So early as during his apprenticeship it is recorded of him how, walking on a hot Sunday to Highgate with some companions—brother 'prentices, most likely, out of the Leicester Square purlieus—they entered a public-house to rest, and there found a quarrel going on, in which "the quart-pots, being the only missiles at hand, were soon flying about the room in glorious confusion." The scene took the fancy of the budding satirist. "He drew out his pencil and produced on the spot one of the most ludicrous pieces that ever was seen." Thus, even while almost totally uninstructed, his faculty showed itself. He went about everywhere with open eyes, in which lay the gift not

of that poetic insight which penetrates through outward aspects to the heart, but of seeing the outside combinations, the facts of ordinary life, the strange faces and gestures, the accidents and catastrophes, of prose and everyday existence. This manner of studying nature without the accompaniment of "the life" is a thing which few painters would be likely to recommend to pupils of genius; and Hogarth's theory, which is avowedly based upon an inclination and habit of mind totally different from that which "scorns delights and lives laborious days," is one very little applicable to general cases. That a man should want no other instruction, no work or study, beyond that which could be got by "acquiring and retaining in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw," and should by that means only acquire as "clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who can write freely hath of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet," is for the ordinary mind a very astounding notion. The letters of the alphabet, fortunately, do not change the position of their legs and arms, as the human subject has a painful inclination to do; and the clearest idea of a scene—nay, the power to represent it vividly in words—does not, unhappily, convey to a writer any power over the other art. When the painter first propounded his notions, which would seem to have been during his fitful occasional attendance at the first "life" school established in England, one of his comrades drew from it the not unnatural conclusion, *that the only way to draw well was not to*

draw at all! a commentary which Hogarth accepts with sufficient good-humour from an "arch brother of the pencil," who "supposed," he adds, "that if I wrote an essay on the art of swimming, I should prohibit my pupil from going into the water *until he had learned.*" The suggestion, however, is quite consistent with the daring and somewhat arrogant sense of power which genius is apt to give to a mind so energetic, self-esteeming, and unimaginative. His aim was to express the abounding ideas of his active brain rather than to produce any "thing of beauty," and he was content with just so much mastery over the technicalities of his art as enabled him to do this. In short, he pursued art as if it had been literature, with the most curious absence of that craving after absolute excellence which distinguishes the painter —and was from the first less concerned about his mode of expressing himself than about what he had to say.

Having thus framed for himself his own scheme of life and work, the young man, once free of the trammels of his apprenticeship, seems to have attempted no further exercise of the trade which he had just finished learning. "The instant I became master of my own time I determined to qualify myself for engraving on copper," he says; and we are told by one of his biographers that "he supported himself at this period of his life by engraving arms and shop-bills." His own statement, however, is, that his first work was in the shape of frontispieces and illustra-

tions to books, many of which—his illustrations of *Hudibras*, *Don Quixote*, &c. — are still preserved, though of merit marvellously inferior to what was to come. This early preface to life was not without its struggles. He went not too often to "the academy in St Martin's Lane." He went about the world with bright eyes, noting everything, taking in a crowd of objects familiar as daily bread, yet wonderful and strange as truth ever is, into his teeming, working, throbbing brain, which had no fantastical susceptibility about it, nor tendency to be readily excited—and fasted and feasted with the joyous characteristic improvidence of his age and his craft. "I remember the time," he says, "when I have gone moping into the city with scarce a shilling; but as soon as I have received ten guineas there for a plate, I have returned home, put on my sword, and sallied out again with all the confidence of a man who had thousands in his pockets." The sword seems the only doubtful particular in this little sketch—everything else is, no doubt, as true to the life as may well be; but the homely, independent young *bourgeois*, proud of himself and his powers, and half scornfully, half good-humouredly indifferent to the opinion of others, seems scarcely likely to have troubled himself with such an appendage. Thus, however, he worked through the difficulties of his beginning—studying very little in the ordinary sense of the word; yet wherever he was, "while my eyes were open," as he says, "I was at my studies, and acquiring something useful to my

profession. I could do little more than maintain myself until I was near thirty," he adds, "but even then I was a punctual paymaster." The picture he thus gives of himself is as clear as any he ever made. An honest fellow, not over-careful either of his money or his time or his words; not self-denying, yet conscientious according to his fashion; determined to have his own way even in art; very confident of his own powers; dauntless in his undertakings; undiscouraged by failure—a jovial, careless, stubborn, prejudiced, yet righteous soul, without delicacy of perception or fineness of feeling, but with an eye like the light that saw and could not help seeing, and a mind strongly prepossessed with that vulgar powerful sense of morality in which there is nothing really religious, nothing spiritual nor elevating, but yet a vigour and force of influence upon the crowd which it is difficult to over-estimate. Such a man—troubled by no delicate scruples, endowed with such coarse, vigorous, moral sentiments, and set free to work as he listed in an age so full of social corruption—might be trusted to find work worth the doing. And Hogarth found his and did it, gaining strength as he went on.

The first print he published separately was one called the "Taste of the Town," now known as "Burlington Gate," which is simple satire, and shows little more than an impatient disgust with fashionable follies. The spectator does not feel quite sure, indeed, whether, had Cuzzoni and the others been English instead of Italian, they would have called forth so

strongly the painter's wrath, since it is less their craft than their country that seems to annoy him. These were the days of rampant nationality, when an Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen, and when even so impartial a mind as that of Hume recognised with surprise and benevolent satisfaction that Germany was a habitable country. The London citizen homely and arrogant, cannot throw sufficient scorn upon the Italian singer, of whom every contemptuous hypothesis is taken for granted, and whose puny head mounted on a big body, or loose-lipped, imbecile countenance, shows in the most primitive way the low place he is supposed to occupy in creation. While crowds are pouring to masquerade and opera in this print, a waste-paper dealer wheels across the foreground a wheel-barrow full of the neglected works of English dramatists, in which, however, Shakespeare ranks no higher than Congreve. The state of art is symbolised behind by a statue of Kent, the architect-painter, landscape-gardener, and general art-referee of the moment, who stands erect on the summit of Burlington Gate, supported by reclining figures of Michael Angelo and Raphael! This was the satirist's first essay in the branch of art he was afterwards to carry to so great a height. And there is not much meaning in it beyond the satisfaction of a half-trained man in his first savage stroke of ridicule. It took the fancy of the public, however, and became so popular that it was pirated, and Hogarth lost his just gains. It is supposed by various commenta-

tors that the prominent position of Kent in this and later prints was intended not only to express Hogarth's own fierce contempt of the charlatan in his own art, but to conciliate the favour of Sir James Thornhill, whose academy the young artist was attending fitfully, with more cultivation of his argumentative powers than of any other, so far as can be made out, and whose young daughter was an attraction still more powerful. Except the bare facts, however, not a gleam of light is there to reveal the progress of the romance. Sir James's academy was held "in a room he had built at the back of his own house, now next the playhouse," says Hogarth; and here, perhaps, the struggling artist caught glimpses of the city maiden, no inapt representation of the legendary master's daughter of all London romances. It would be easy to imagine the stolen progress of the courtship, the visions of the young princess of the wealthy reputable house, only daughter and heart's delight, furtively gleaming upon the bold rebel who kept her father's studio in commotion, and fought like Ishmael against all theories and traditions. He was no longer a boy, but over thirty, working hard, with a pugnacious, unquenchable determination to pay his way and make his way, and earn wealth and fame; and she in the simplicity of twenty, with perhaps—most likely—a little womanly enthusiasm for art, and faith in it—not to say faith in the bold-eyed daring man, neither boy nor milksop, who was so sure of his own powers. Romance and Covent Garden

seem little in keeping; and yet, no doubt, such a thing exists even now, when there are no quaint eighteenth-century interiors, no old-fashioned passages down which a pretty, demure figure, in snowy cap and hanging ruffles, might be seen gliding by as in a Dutch picture. And the issue was that Jane Thornhill ran away with the painter, though how and in what fashion we have no record.

It was, no doubt, a most imprudent match. He was thirty-three, and yet had done nothing to justify his own self-confidence. Not that indolence was a vice which could be charged against him. For thirteen years he had been hard at work, doing illustrations, frontispieces, every kind of drudgery that booksellers would supply him with. He had even made a beginning in painting, and attempted to conciliate legitimate art by what he calls "conversation pieces;" but was still a struggling poor artist, not having yet struck the key-note of fame. Not very long before, indeed, he had been pronounced in court to be no painter at all, in the most humiliating and discouraging way. A more curious episode in the story of a man just trembling on the brink of fame could scarcely be. A Mr Morris, an upholsterer, engaged him to make a design for tapestry, "a representation of the Element Earth," whatever that may have been. Immediately afterwards, the alarmed tradesman found out that the artist he had intrusted with such an important commission was no painter, but only an engraver! Upon this "I became uneasy," says the

patron of art, "and sent one of my servants to him, who stated my apprehensions; to which Mr Hogarth replied that it was certainly a bold and unusual kind of undertaking; and if Mr Morris did not like it when finished, he should not be asked to pay for it. The work was completed and sent home; but my tapestry-workers, who are mostly foreigners, and some of them the finest hands in Europe, and perfect judges of performances of that nature, were all of opinion that it was not finished in a workmanlike manner, and that it was impossible to execute tapestry by it." The verdict was in the upholsterer's favour, and Hogarth had to swallow the affront as best he might. Nor was the patronage he met with always of a more dignified nature. He is reported to have sold his plates to the landlord of the Black Horse in Cornhill by the weight of the copper. "I am only certain that this occurrence happened in a single instance," says Nicholls, his biographer, "when the elder Bowles offered, over a bottle, half-a-crown a pound weight for a plate just then completed." Probably the incident was not so humbling to Hogarth as it looks at this date, when painters are not in the habit of discussing their works "over a bottle" with publicans. But yet these indications are sufficient to show that the path of the young artist was no primrose path, and that he had his full share of those difficulties and mortifications which fall peculiarly to the lot of the self-trained and self-opinionated son of genius in all arts.

His Bohemian life, however, ceased with his marriage, and the sobering touch of household necessities and fully-developed existence speedily showed its effects upon his work. He took a house in Leicester Fields, and entered the world of legitimate art formally as a portrait-painter. What his domestic circumstances were there is no record, but he seems to have claimed ineffectually from his father-in-law the portion which Thornhill probably thought his daughter had forfeited by her clandestine marriage; and it was hard times with the new household. His portraits did not succeed. "I could not bring myself to act like some of my brethren, and make it a sort of manufactory, to be carried on by the help of background and drapery painters," he himself says. "I was unwilling to sink into a portrait manufacturer," he adds, in another place, and proceeds with scornful force to describe the process:—

"A man of very moderate talents may have great success in it, as the artifice and address of a mercer is infinitely more useful than the abilities of a painter. By the manner in which the present race of professors in England conduct it, that also becomes still life as much as any of the preceding. Admitting that the artist has no further view than merely copying the figure, this must be admitted to its full extent; for the sitter ought to be still as a statue—and no one will dispute a statue being as much still life as fruit, flowers, a gallipot, or a broken earthen pan. It must, indeed, be acknowledged they do not seem ashamed of the title, for their figures are frequently so executed as to be as still as a post. Posture and drapery, as it is called, is usually supplied by a journeyman, who puts a coat, &c., on a wooden figure like a jointed doll, which they call a layman, and copies it in every fold as it chances to come; and

all this is done at so easy a rate as enables the principal to get more money in a week than a man of the first professional talents can get in three months. If they have a sufficient quantity of silks, satins, and velvets to dress their laymen, they may thus carry on a very profitable manufactory without a ray of genius."

All this, no doubt, had truth in it; but, at the same time, it would be wrong to forget that the man who thus writes was very partially trained, with little real knowledge of the science of painting, and almost no acquaintance with its greatest works. He professed himself ready to compete with Vandyke with a curious vanity which seems peculiar to the British painter, and confesses, not without pride, that "I could not help uttering blasphemous expressions against the divinity even of Raphael Urbino, Correggio, and Michael Angelo." Hogarth's biographers unite in attributing his failure in this branch of art to his uncourtly tendency to paint men as they were—a reason which he himself also adduces. "I found, by mortifying experience," he says, "that whoever would succeed must adopt the mode recommended in one of Gay's fables, and make divinities of all who sit to him." This too, however, must be taken *cum grano*. Every one is aware how doubtful is the success in portraiture of historical or *genre* painters, who are in the habit of "taking the life," to use Hogarth's phrase, as a general guide, without filling their pictures with portraits of their models. A painter of character naturally lies under a still greater difficulty. Each artist instinctively seizes upon that phase of physiog-

nomy which attracts his special genius. The idealist may fail more agreeably than the humourist, but it is still a failure; his sitter is a model to him, not an individual; whereas to Hogarth his sitter was a character whose trenchant points he could not help seizing, and to whom he assigned a place involuntarily in the wild grotesque life-drama which he always felt to be going on around him. His portrait of himself, of Captain Coram, and one or two others, are full of homely force and reality; but beauty was not in his way. At the same time, there is no doubt that his arrogant spirit and fiery temper must have had much to do with his failure. "For the portrait of Mr Garrick in 'Richard III.' I was paid two hundred pounds, which was more than any English artist ever received for a single portrait," he says; yet when Mrs Garrick complained of another portrait of her husband, that it looked "less noble" than the original, "Hogarth drew his pencil across David's mouth, and never touched the piece again." A still more savage instance of resentment is recorded of him by the moral Dr Trusler, in the first instance, and afterwards by all his biographers. A man of unusual ugliness, and even deformity, was so ill advised as to sit to him for his portrait, which Hogarth painted "with singularly rigid fidelity." The unfortunate sitter was in no hurry to claim the performance when finished, and after making repeated applications to him for the removal of his portrait and for its payment, Hogarth took the following unpardonable

means of getting himself paid. "He sent him," says Dr Trusler, "the following card: 'Mr Hogarth's dutiful respects to Lord ——. Finding that he does not mean to have the picture which was drawn for him, is informed again of Mr Hogarth's pressing necessities for the money. If, therefore, his lordship does not send for it in three days, it will be disposed of, with the addition of a tail and some other appendages, to Mr Hare, the famous wild-beast man; Mr H. having given that gentleman a conditional promise on his lordship's refusal.' This intimation," adds the Doctor, with a chuckle, "had its desired effect—the picture was paid for, and committed to the flames."

Now it cannot be supposed that it is an agreeable thing to pay for a picture only for the purpose of committing it to the flames, nor could the polite world be expected to subject itself to assaults of savage insolence like the above; and the wonder rather is that Hogarth had any sitters at all, than that his sitters were few. We find, however, in his journal a list of unfinished pictures during the first year of his marriage, which shows he was not without patronage. It includes "a family piece of four figures for Mr Rich; an assembly of twenty-five figures for Lord Castlemain; family of four figures for Mr Wood; a conversation of six figures for Mr Cook; a family of five figures for Mr Jones; the Committee of the House of Commons for Sir Archibald Grant; . . . a family of nine for Mr Vernon;

. . . another of five for the Duke of Montague, &c. &c." These were no doubt the "small conversation pieces, from twelve to fifteen inches high," which, as he himself says, "having novelty, succeeded for a few years." These pictures are for the most part lost in private collections, and unknown to the public. At the same time, while still casting about for his fit work, with dim suggestions of it floating in his brain, but no certain inspiration to guide him, a more ambitious project crossed his mind. He was, it is evident, so totally uninstructed in art as to be able to conceive it possible that he, with his imperfect training, might make a sudden hit in the highest branch of his profession, having little more than natural genius of a totally different bent to help him up to the elevation of Raphael and Buonarotti. Thus poor Haydon, with wild and melancholy arrogance, pitted himself against the time-tried honours of Sebastian; and Turner, with better reason, though no more lofty meaning, has elected to go down to posterity in an endless duel with calm Claude, all unconscious of the quarrel fixed upon him. We are not aware that any but English artists have ever conceived so strange a struggle possible. It is thus that Hogarth describes his first attempt at high art, and the intention with which it was made:—

"I entertained some hopes," he says, "of succeeding in what puffers in books call *the great style of History-painting*, so that, without having had a stroke of this *grand* business before, I quitted small portraits and familiar conversations, and, with a smile at my own temerity, commenced history-painter, and on

a great staircase at St Bartholomew's Hospital painted two Scripture stories, the 'Pool of Bethesda,' and the 'Good Samaritan,' with figures seven feet high. These I presented to the charity, and thought they might serve as a specimen to show that, were there an inclination in England for encouraging historical pictures, such a first essay might prove the painting them more easily attainable than is generally imagined."

The result, as was to be looked for, by no means fulfilled the hopes with which it was made. These vast compositions "served as a specimen" to show, not what English art could do if properly encouraged, but that sacred art was not in Hogarth's way, and that he had nothing to do with the grand and heroic. Probably he had himself made the discovery before he had finished the pictures. The same eventful crisis just after his marriage—when his conversation pieces began to fail, and when it became more and more evident that, the heroic also failing, or promising to fail, some new attempt must be made to strike out an individual path—roused in him renewed ponderings over his own powers, and what he was to do with them. He could not depend continuously upon miserable book-illustrations or uncertain painting of faces. He felt himself thrill with power and the capacity for doing something, though he did not yet see what; and in this moment of doubt his musings took the following form :—

"I thought both writers and painters had, in the historical style, totally overlooked that intermediate species of subjects which may be placed between the sublime and grotesque. I therefore wished to compose pictures on canvas similar to representations on the stage; and further, hope that they will be

tried by the same tests, and criticised by the same criterion. Let it be observed that I mean to speak only of those scenes where the human species are actors, and these, I think, have not often been delineated in a way of which they are worthy and capable.

"In these compositions those subjects that will both entertain and improve the mind bid fair to be of the greatest public utility, and must therefore be entitled to rank in the highest class. If the execution is difficult (though that is but a secondary merit), the author has claim to a higher degree of praise. If this be admitted, comedy, in painting as well as writing, ought to be allotted the first place, as most capable of all these perfections, though *the sublime*, as it is called, has been opposed to it. Ocular demonstration will carry more conviction to the mind of a sensible man than all he would find in a thousand volumes; and this has been attempted in the prints I have composed. Let the decision be left to every unprejudiced eye; let the figures in either pictures or prints be considered as players dressed either for the sublime, for genteel comedy or farce, for high or low life. I have endeavoured to treat my subjects as a dramatic writer; my picture is my stage, and men and women my players, who by means of certain actions and gestures are to exhibit a *dumb show*."

"I therefore turned my thoughts to a still more novel mode," he proceeds—"viz., painting and engraving modern moral subjects, a field not broken up in any country or age." This resolution produced "The Harlot's Progress," "The Rake's Progress," and "The Marriage à-la-Mode," works more individual and remarkable than have ever, either before or since, distinguished British art. We do not say more beautiful, for that is a totally different question. Other English painters since his time have added many a sweet conception and fair fancy to the world's store of wealth; but Hogarth is alone in the

remarkable effort by which he found his true work. He had spent his youth in unceasing attempts to make it out, and it was only in his mature manhood at thirty-five that he stumbled at last upon the true vein which he had been born to explore.

The whole process is so curious, that it is worth almost as much study as the works themselves in which it at last found its issue. By rebellion against every tradition of his art—by attempts in a hundred different ways to express the yet inexpressible—by lawless studies, and equally lawless contradictions of other men's studies — by self-confidence which reaches the point of arrogance — the bull-headed, clear-sighted painter at last found out in his groping those tools which are always to be found somehow by those who can use them. He was one of the men who are born dissenters and protesters against the course of the ordinary world. That he should have been in arms against the false taste which cultivated a meaningless mythology was nothing—his nature required that he should wield his weapons also against the true taste, confusedly brightening through many shadows upon *dilettanti* circles, which were too fine and too pretentious to win any sympathy from the prejudiced Englishman. Raphael was an Italian, and consequently of some kindred to the opera-singer, whose pockets were overflowing with English gold, while English genius could scarce find bread to eat; and therefore the divinest of painters excited in the mind of the stubborn islander

a covert envious contempt, which he was half ashamed, half proud to express. But the pugnacity which was so strong in his own profession, took a different character when the Ishmael of art turned his keen gaze upon the world which he had frequented from his childhood, and which was professedly his school and studio. Among those crowds which attracted and absorbed him, in which his vivid eye traced the perpetual clash of human interests, and equally perpetual thread of human identity, what wild mischief was working! There was innocence, a white, helpless, feeble thing, fluttering for a moment on the verge of the abyss, with no inward power of resistance, or external force to protect it; there was Vice, boisterous and triumphant, filling the foreground of the national picture, always the loudest, the gayest, the most prominent object; and there was Destruction, stalking quietly in hideous universal dominion, quenching the mirth, stripping off the gaudy robes, visiting upon everything its awful sentence. Such were the figures, dramatic and memorable, which Hogarth saw appearing and reappearing through the careless tragic crowd. He traced them now through one group, now through another—always the same uncertain beginning, the same flutter of short-lived pleasure, the same dismal annihilation. Nothing higher, nothing more subtle, in the complications of this terrible existence, was apparent to him; nor indeed was any other view possible either to the constitution of his mind or the nature of his

art, which required the positive in all things, and had no words in which to express those gradations and shades of good and evil which form the favourite study of the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth, vice and virtue were sharply discriminated. The age, with all its artificiality, had that primitive character which belongs to a second-rate age. It believed in poetic justice, in swift rewards and punishments, in an edifying reality of recompense, such as the age of Shakespeare could no more have believed in than does our own. It was a sham century, full of false pretences in everything; and yet it was childishly realistic in its moral theories, and took it for granted that the industrious apprentice must come to be Lord Mayor, and the idle one be hanged at Tyburn, with a mingled belief in, and indifference to, the moral which is wonderful to behold. Such a strange satisfaction and confidence in the vindictive sovereignty of Justice is characteristic of a licentious age—perhaps because human instinct makes it apparent that without that last restraint the world must fall into utter and unmanageable corruption. It is only when higher canons of morality prevail, when decency has become the rule and not the exception, and when evil things hide themselves from the daylight, that humanity dares admit in words how often it is the good who suffer, and how generally the bad escape. Such an idea at least had never dawned on our painter. The other lesson was the lesson for his time; and with all his character-

istic daring, with the vehemence of a man who has at last found utterance, and feels the power in his own hands, he proceeded to pour it forth upon the astonished world.

The story of "The Harlot's Progress" is already sufficiently indicated by its name. It is a hideous and miserable tragedy, without pathos or tenderness, but with a certain elevating touch of terror, the gloom of an inevitable catastrophe. Even in the first scene the horror already creeps in shadow over the doomed creature, with whom, however, the spectator is never called upon to have any sympathy. The tale is as pitiless as it is desperate. The young country girl, fresh and modest, with the rose in her bosom, and the innocence of ignorance in her face, does not, even in that one glimpse of her unfallen estate, appeal to the heart of the beholder. She is an easy, not unwilling, victim. The idea of any struggle on her part to stand against the hideous peril that approaches her has evidently never entered into her creator's mind. She is innocent because she knows no better, ready to be dazzled by the first gleam of temptation, the aptest pupil in the horrible school. And the vice into which she falls is unsoftened by the slightest veil of sentiment. In the second design it is full-blown and rampant, corrupted to the very core, with treachery added to depravity. It is evident that she has fallen without a struggle, and adopted her horrible trade without any compunctions. The third picture shows her

reduced from luxury to squalor, but still as calm in her wickedness, as destitute of any relenting or movement of heart or conscience, as if she were a woman cut out of stone. She has added robbery by this time to her accomplishments, and plays with the watch she has stolen with a certain childish complacency in her acquisition. In the following scene, which shows her in Bridewell, there is a certain pitiful half-whimpering wonder in her face, which for the first time introduces human feeling into the awful tale—a sudden "blank misgiving of a creature moving about in worlds not realised" has come over the fair, foolish, unawakened countenance. Is it possible that it can be required of her to labour and keep silence, she who has had but idleness and noise and mad merrymaking since her career began? This look of childish complaint and wonder is the only trace of humanity in the wretched being who is thus pursued without sympathy to her miserable end. Her death, like her outset, makes no claim upon our pity. It is bare tragedy—dreadful, not pathetic. We gaze and are silent, but no tears come to our eyes. Such a passionless narrative, horribly calm and immovable, would be, we believe, impossible nowadays. But it adds in the most wonderful way to the moral effect of the story. Vice has never been without its sympathisers and bewailers. It has been clothed in sentimental colours, associated with love and generosity, and many of the highest qualities of the heart. False lights of every descrip-

tion have been thrown upon it—lights of genius, of wit, of splendour and luxury—everything that can most dazzle and confuse the mind. And though the highest portraiture of all would no doubt breathe an infinite pity for the lost and hopeless, yet there is in this rigid unsympathetic history a force which feeling cannot command. His heroine was no horror to Hogarth any more than she was a divinity. He could smile at her tricks, and enter into her tastes, and realise her fully as a conceivable being; but he has no pity for her, and he asks none from the public. There she stands, the curse and bane of whomsoever crosses her path—mean, heartless, loveless, miserable—doomed from the beginning, yet taking no grandeur even from her doom.

This awful story Hogarth wrote up before the eyes of the world which knew her, and knew how true it was; and this was his moral—that vice was impossible; that it was ruin; that its doom was pronounced the moment the first step was taken; and that none escaped. It is hard to tell whether the painter meant or was aware of the frightful satire contained in his postscript, the funeral scene round which so many horrors crowd. He has been labouring to teach a terrible lesson, and yet, in the very moment of completing it, he is compelled to admit the fruitlessness of any lesson. Dr Trusler, who expounds the prints, does his best to throw a shade of ridicule upon the whole by the solemn suggestion that "the appearance and employment of

almost every one present at this mockery of woe is such as must raise disgust in the breast of any female who has the least tincture of delicacy, and excite a wish that such an exhibition may not be displayed at her own funeral!" The meaning of the picture, however, whether intentional or not, is infinitely more profound than this smug bit of eighteenth-century morality. It is, as we have said, at the end of the most trenchant and terrible warning, an exhibition of the fact still more terrible, that human nature is unteachable; that its levity is not sobered, nor its evil instincts subdued, even by the severest lesson; that proof itself fails to convince, or death to solemnise it; and that the preacher, be he ever so earnest, must acknowledge that he preaches in vain.

These wonderful pictures made an immediate revolution in the circumstances and prospects of the painter. By the anxious wiles of his young wife and her mother, who were eagerly seeking means of reconciliation between his father-in-law and himself, the series was placed clandestinely in Thornhill's drawing-room. The bit of family history involved in his observations on them is amusing and characteristic. The old painter was moved to instant admiration. He was himself a classicist, but had evidently sufficient candour of mind to perceive the originality and vigour of this new attempt in art. He asked eagerly who was the artist; but when he was informed a humorous change ensued. "Oh,

very well; very well indeed," said Jane Thornhill's father. "The man who can paint such pictures as these can maintain a wife without a portion!" It is almost the only occasion upon which the veil of absolute obscurity is lifted from Hogarth's domestic life. The quarrel, we are told, was afterwards entirely made up, as such quarrels generally are in the long-run, and the portion thus contended for would seem to have been eventually granted. "He afterwards considered the union of his daughter with a man of such abilities an honour to his family, was reconciled, and generous," says Dr Trusler—another proof of the oft-proved principle that there is nothing so successful as success. The outer world was equally favourable. "When the publication was advertised, such was the expectation of the town that above twelve hundred names were entered in the subscription book. . . . At a time when England was coldly inattentive to everything which related to the arts, so desirous were all ranks of people of seeing how this little domestic story (!) was delineated, that there were eight piratical imitations, besides two copies in a smaller size than the original, published by permission of the author. To show still further the taste of the time, it is added that "the whole series were copied on fan-mounts representing the six plates —three on one side and three on the other." These fans were no doubt presented, in the interests of morality, to young and innocent women, whose ears

we would now think polluted by the very name. Thus, as time changes, the reformations of one age become the wonder and scandal of another.

There were, however, other circumstances besides their originality and merit which attracted the public attention to these remarkable prints. The debauchee in the first of the series was identified as the Colonel Charteris already distinguished by Pope. The magistrate in the third attracted the instant admiration of society as a portrait of Mr Justice Gonson, a judge famous for his pursuit of the vicious. Other likenesses were discovered or imagined as the series went on; and thus the crowd solaced itself with a piece of gigantic gossip, which satisfied those who were incapable of any graver impression. Other prints, too, had prepared the way for the first epic series—"The Man of Taste"—a reproduction of the gate of Burlington House, with Kent planted on the apex, but with the addition of a figure of Pope whitewashing the wall and bespattering the passers-by, in allusion to his unjustifiable onslaught on the Duke of Chandos; "Southwark Fair," "The Examination of Bambridge before the House of Commons," &c. These had been gradually preparing the way for his grand success, and at last the eye and interest of the public were finally won.

His second series appeared not much more than a year later. It is the fatal career of a man instead of a woman which the painter treats in the second place, with a corresponding change of rank from the lowest

to a higher class. The Rake is introduced to us as the heir of a miser, whose fortune would seem to have fallen suddenly and even unexpectedly into his hands. He has the aspect of a gentleman-rustic, the young squire of the age, with a fair meaningless young face, and a story of premature wickedness to mark that he is already a man of spirit. This story is intertwined through the whole course of the more sombre drama, with an attempt, the only one Hogarth ever made, to exhibit suffering, truth, and goodness in contrast with depravity. The attempt cannot, however, be said to be successful. Virtue, in her conventional guise, is no match for vice in all the force of reality and nature; and the ministering angel who hovers over her seducer, delivering him from want and attending him in his misery, is the only unreal thing in the tragedy. In the first scene the elated heir is refusing to acknowledge the claims made upon him by the weeping victim and her mother, to whom he offers money with the *insouciance* of the conventional betrayer of innocence. Not so dazzling as Lovelace, he is the Squire Thornhill of the time, evidently the favourite and most familiar hero of popular fiction; and there is nothing elevated in the country lass, with her apron to her eyes, and a ring held between her fingers, of whom the young good-for-nothing is calmly disembarrassing himself. The second scene is pure comedy, revealing the hero as a full-blown man of fashion, holding that levee of dependants and flatterers with which the world by

this time is so familiar. Then comes a horrible orgy in a tavern, where the hero, his expression changing from the imbecility of complacent patronage to the deeper imbecility of intoxication, is still the centre of the revolting group. The fourth print, the least successful of the series, reveals the first check in his career. He is going to court in all his finery when his chair is stopped, and the bailiffs interrupt his progress; but are in their turn interrupted by the forgiving and faithful woman, the victim of the first scene, who, we are to suppose, has so far prospered in the mean time as to be able to deliver him by means of the purse which she holds up with indignant pity. The next scene is the hero's marriage to a simpering and substantial old maid, who stands in forcible contrast to the pretty young girl arranging her dress behind, by the side of the dismayed prodigal, who submits to his fate with averted eyes and stolid face. Dr Trusler is very hard upon this unhappy bride. "An observer," he says, "being asked, *How dreadful must be this creature's hatred?* would naturally reply, *How hateful must be her love?*"—a discussion which, however, seems quite beyond the question. The Rake's funds being thus recruited, we find him next the tragic centre of a gambling scene. He has thrown himself on one knee in a despair which is too theatrical for reality, having first plucked off from his shaven head the wig which lies on the floor beside him. This histrionic anguish, however, is powerfully contrasted by the

dumb despair of the seated figure beside him, who is evidently too much absorbed by his own losses and failure to have either eye or ear for anything else. In the seventh print the oft-averted ruin has at length and finally come. The hero is in prison, in a crowded room in the Fleet, in which an extraordinary group are collected around him. By his side stands his old wife, dishevelled and furious, pouring forth her rage upon him. In the foreground the woman whom he forsook and deceived falls fainting, overcome, it is supposed, by the sight of his sufferings. The hero himself, curiously matured and changed, sits with staring eyes and shrugged-up shoulders, listening, as if he heard them not, to his wife's reproaches, and the demands of the jailer and potboy, who appeal to him on the other side. Of all the series this is perhaps the most powerful figure, though a curiously foreign element has been introduced, for which the spectator is quite unprepared. On the edge of ruin the young debauchée has turned author. On the table beside him lies a roll of paper and an open letter intimating that his play "will not do:" and it is evidently the failure of this last hope which fills his worn face with such a vacancy of despair.

No doubt Hogarth intended the incident as the fiercest satire upon the play-writers of the time; and in this picture of the ruined prodigal—with no other inspiration than that hideous knowledge of the vilest phases of humanity which it is common to call knowledge of the world, making a last attempt to retrieve

his fortunes by means of the art of Shakespeare—was aiming a crushing blow at many a fashionable dramatist. But the Rake's despairing effort has been too bad to be floated into life even by his notoriety; his wig is pushed back from his forehead, one open hand raised in expostulation, a bewildered hopelessness in his face. The faint of his old love before his eyes affects him not so much as the demand of the pot-boy; his mind has no room for such emotions. And the spectator looking on would like to clear off the ministering angel as an encumbrance, and feels neither sympathy for her nor interest in her. She is thrust artificially into the story, an interpolation interfering with its completeness. The last scene of all leaves the hero in a madhouse, supported and tended by his faithful and virtuous victim. Thus, while death concludes the misery of the woman-criminal, insanity obliterates the fuller life of the man who has turned every good gift bestowed upon him into bitterness. The story is less simple, and so is the moral, but the lesson is not less forcibly urged. In the first pictorial narrative everything was clear and concise, written with a pen of iron upon tablets of stone—impurity, which is the supremest rebellion against all the laws of life, followed by swift destruction, death, and the end. But in the other story the lines are less distinct; confusion has crept over heaven and earth; a perpetual jar runs through everything. There is the bewildering change from obscurity to wealth; the rapture of possession; the sudden fall and rising,

and reprecipitation into the abyss, all following each other with a rapidity which takes away the breath. It is all confusion and chaos, beginning in folly, ending in madness; no longer passive ignorance falling prone and at once, but a thousand gifts misused, opportunities wasted, good turned into evil, love and truth and nature all twisted into overthrow, and Bedlam at the end.

"The Rake's Progress" was not quite so successful as the preceding series—partly, no doubt, because it was the second, and partly from the greater elaboration of the story. But still we are told that its success "must have been great; for it was satisfactory to the artist himself." The figures were again in many cases portraits; but the chances are that this particular, so totally unimportant nowadays, at so great a distance of time, had but little to do even with contemporary popularity. For such characters as "the fencing-master Dubois," "the miser Old Manners," "the maniac William Ellis," could not be sufficiently well known to the multitude to move its interest. By this time wealth had begun to flow upon the ever-energetic painter. He became able to add to his town-house "summer lodgings in Lambeth Terrace," then no doubt a healthy rural neighbourhood, where "the house which he occupied is still shown, and a vine pointed out which he planted. While residing there he became intimate with the proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens, and embellished them with designs." The "Four Parts of the Day"

were composed for this use, and a host of other works testify to the untiring vigour of the artist, who at last found himself appreciated, and evidently laboured with a sense of enjoyment under the pleasant stimulus of applause. In the ten years which elapsed between the publication of "The Rake's Progress" and that of "Marriage à-la-Mode" he had produced "The Modern Midnight Conversation," a wonderful group of revellers, most of them in the last stage of intoxication; "The Sleeping Congregation;" "The Distressed Poet;" a group of Doctors in consultation, known as "The Undertakers' Arms;" an equally grotesque group of students at a lecture; "The Four Parts of the Day;" "Strolling Actresses Dressing in a Barn;" a curious emblematical drawing called "The Foundlings," as bad and flat in its high virtue and benevolence as the others are spirited and graphic, which was intended for the use of the newly-founded hospital; "The Enraged Musician," "Taste in High Life," &c., besides a crowd of other less remarkable works. At the same time, in this period of satisfied and prosperous, but always pugnacious activity, he painted several portraits with the avowed intention of rivalling the old painters whom his *dilettanti* friends worshipped. In one of his perpetual argumentations at the academy in St Martin's Lane, Hogarth, "provoked," as he tells us, "by their perpetual glorification of the past, put the following question: 'Supposing,'" says the sturdy rebel, "'that any man at this time were to paint a portrait as well

as Vandyke, would it be seen or acknowledged, and could the artist enjoy the benefit or acquire the reputation due to his performance?' They asked me, in reply," he proceeds, "'if I would paint one as well?' and I frankly answered, 'I believe I could.'" Thus it will be seen that not even success calmed down the fighting nature of the self-dependent painter. The portrait of Captain Coram, to which he refers as "the one which I painted with most pleasure, and in which I particularly wished to excel," is an admirable serious portrait of the homely philanthropist, whose work had evidently interested and stirred Hogarth's kindly pugnacious heart; but neither in that nor in the fat complacent features of Bishop Hoadley, whom he painted about the same time, is anything to be found which could affect the pre-eminence of Vandyke. It seemed necessary to the vigorous arrogant soul, incapable of any doubt of its own powers, to make a strain at the impossible now and then as life went on; and it is curious to find him doing it quite as eagerly now, at the height of his fame, as when working unfriended and eager, with his heart burning within him, and a sense of unexercised power swelling in all his veins.

A more legitimate use of his natural combativeness was made in 1735, when, justly disgusted and alarmed by the losses he sustained from spurious copies and imitations of his prints, he sought and obtained, in concert with various other artists and printsellers, the law of copyright in drawings and engrav-

ings, which secured to him the benefit of his own genius. He was so much satisfied by the promptitude of the Legislature, that he engraved a print to commemorate the event, with an inscription which is more characteristic than modest—"In humble and grateful acknowledgment," he says, "of the grace and goodness of the Legislature, manifested in the Act of Parliament for the encouraging of the arts of designing, engraving, &c., obtained by the endeavours, and almost at the sole expense, of the designer of this print, in 1735." It was, however, a very natural subject of self-gratulation, since it was his prints and not his pictures which gave him the modest wealth he had now attained. "He was rich enough to keep his carriage," says Allan Cunningham; "and though brother artists conceded to him the name of painter with whimsical reluctance, he was everywhere received with the respect and honour due to a man of high talents and uncommon attainments." So little seems to be authentically known of his private life, that it is vain to make any attempt to discover its fashion. "He loved state in his dress" —the same authority adds, somewhat vaguely, "and good order in his household; and the success of his works enabled him to indulge in the luxuries of a good table and pleasant guests." The plain English of this, apparently, is, that the painter was somewhat lavish and open-handed, living up to his means, and taking little thought for the morrow. Barry describes him as "a little man in a sky-blue coat," whom he

saw once standing at the corner of a street encouraging two boys to fight. Probably he painted them afterwards, with that lively pictorial sense of what it must all come to, which did not interfere with his natural English delight in the moment's sport. He was a friend of Fielding and of Garrick, but does not appear to have made his way into fashionable society, though he painted pictures for Horace Walpole, and had patrons of title like other men. Probably he was himself too *brusque*, too opinionated, too little considerate of the feelings of others, for such a promotion.

Just before the publication of his last, and in some respects greatest, series of engravings, Hogarth sold the pictures from which his former prints were taken in a whimsical and eccentric way by auction. They had all, it appears, up to this time, remained in his hands. It was in the January of '45, when so many things were going on, when Prince Charlie was preparing to cross the Channel, and the kingdom, in the eyes of many, was on the very edge of a great convulsion; and it gives us a curious glimpse into the individual calm and leisure of that inner world of London, where Richardson sat working at his *Clarissa*, and every man went after his ordinary affairs, to find Hogarth concocting a scheme which looks like a practical joke, and in which there probably was a certain suppressed irony, for the disposal of his pictures. "On the 25th of January . . . he offered for sale the six pictures of "The Harlot's Progress,"

the eight paintings of "The Rake's Progress," "The Four Times of the Day," and "The Strolling Actresses," on the following conditions:—

"1. Every bidder shall have an entire leaf numbered in the book of sale, on the top of which will be inscribed his name and place of abode, the sum paid by him, the time when, and for which picture.

"2. That on the day of sale, a clock, striking every five minutes, shall be placed in the room; and when it hath struck five minutes after twelve, the first picture mentioned in the sale-book shall be deemed as sold; the second picture when the clock hath struck the next five minutes after twelve, and so on in succession till the whole nineteen pictures are sold.

"3. That none advance less than gold at each bidding.

"4. No person to bid on the last day, except those whose names were before entered in the book. As Mr Hogarth's room is but small, he begs the favour that no persons, except those whose names are entered in the book, will come to view his paintings on the last day of sale."

Notwithstanding the natural disinclination of "the town" to take all this trouble, we learn incidentally that Hogarth's study "was full of noble and great personages" when the day of sale arrived. He had still further revealed his opposition to all canons of art by another warlike manifesto in the shape of an admission ticket to his auction, in which a number of well-known pictures by the old masters are seen in personal conflict with Hogarth's own productions, the juxtaposition being often comical enough, though strained and uncomfortable, as are all angry attempts at wit. The sale itself, which was attended by preliminaries so remarkable, was commercially a failure. For the nineteen pictures thus put up to auction he

received only £427. Thus, for a sum which would be but a modest price for one cabinet picture of a well-known painter nowadays, Hogarth, the founder of a school, a painter as widely known and largely popular as if his narratives had been written with the pen instead of the pencil, gave a large number of the best efforts of his genius. "It must have stung his proud spirit," suggests Allan Cunningham; and it is apparent in every line of his personal narrative that the effect of this and the other slights shown to himself and to native art generally, embittered the whole current of Hogarth's thoughts. Even before this humiliating instance of the indifference of the picture-buying classes, he had expressed his opinions on the subject in a letter in defence of Sir James Thornhill's pictures, published in the St James's *Evening Post* of June 7th, 1737—in which he launched fiery arrows of indignation at "the picture-jobbers from abroad," who set their face against all progress in art. It is thus he describes their operations and the effect produced:—

"It is their interest to depreciate every English work as hurtful to their trade of continually importing shiploads of Dead Christs, Holy Families, Madonas, and other dismal, dark subjects, neither entertaining nor ornamental, on which they scrawl the terrible cramp names of some Italian masters, and fix on us poor Englishmen the character of universal dupes. If a man, naturally a judge of painting, not bigoted to those empyrics, should cast his eye on one of their sham-virtuoso pieces, he would be very apt to say, 'Mr Bubbleman, that grand Venus, as you are pleased to call it, has not beauty enough for the character of an English cookmaid.' Upon

which the quack answers, with a confident air, 'Sir, I find that you are no connoisseur. The picture, I assure you, is in Alesso Baldminetto's second and best manner, boldly painted and truly sublime, the contour gracious, the air of the head in the high Greek taste; and a most divine idea it is.' Then, spitting in an obscure place, and rubbing it with a dirty handkerchief, takes a skip to t'other end of the room, and screams out in raptures, 'There's an amazing touch! A man should have this picture a twelvemonth in his collection before he can discover half its beauties!' The gentleman (though naturally a judge of what is beautiful, yet ashamed to be out of the fashion by judging for himself) with this cant is struck dumb, gives a vast sum for the picture, very modestly confesses he is indeed quite ignorant of painting, and bestows a frame worth fifty pounds on a frightful thing, which, without the hard name, is not worth so many farthings. Such impudence as is now continually practised in the picture-trade must meet with its proper treatment would gentlemen but venture to see with their own eyes. Let but the comparison of pictures with nature be their only guide, and let them judge as freely of painting as they do of poetry, they would then take it for granted that when a piece gives pleasure to none but these connoisseurs or their adherents, if the purchase be a thousand pounds, 'tis nine hundred and ninety-nine too dear; and were all our grand collections stripped of such sort of trumpery, then, and not till then, it would be worth an Englishman's while to try the strength of his genius to supply their place, which now it were next to madness to attempt, since there is nothing that has not travelled a thousand miles, or has not been done a hundred years, but is looked upon as mean and ungenteel furniture."

"Marriage à-la-Mode," as we have already said, was published in the year '45. The circumstance that the originals still exist, and are now the property of the nation, makes this series perhaps the most generally known of all. The story cannot be said to be less painful, but there are fewer visible horrors in the

delineation. The first scene shows us the signing of the contract by which the splendid son of a long-descended nobleman condescends to unite himself to a city maiden, the daughter of a wealthy old alderman. Never was contrast more complete than between the respective fathers on either side; and the whole tragedy shadows forth before us in the group on the sofa. The bridegroom, powdered and periwigged, sits turned away from his bride, taking snuff out of the box which he holds gracefully in his hand, and gazing with the profoundest satisfaction at his own image in a great mirror. The lady sits by him listlessly leaning forward, her face full of a dreamy wonder and dissatisfaction, playing with her wedding-ring upon a handkerchief—a wistful creature, half listening to the remark of the barrister in gown and wig, who has turned away from the table on pretence of mending his pen, and bends over her whispering something. She listens with eyes cast down, with the blank look of a being standing on the threshold of an unknown world. Councillor Silvertongue is nothing to her at that strange moment. She is musing, wondering, standing still to gaze at the undecipherable existence—a little sad and disturbed, not knowing what to make of it, hearing and seeing as in a dream. A touch of poetic imagination, unlike his ordinary tragic prose and intense reality, is in this listless, bending, dreamy figure. It interests the spectator, and moves him to a certain pity, as Hogarth's pictures so seldom do. For one moment,

intentionally or unintentionally, we are placed in sympathy with this doomed bride. The second scene is still more powerful. It is morning, and the married pair have met at something which is called breakfast. There has been a late party evidently the night before, and the candles still burn, and a yawning servant rouses himself hurriedly from a nap in the room behind. In the foreground a bewildered steward, who has supposed himself certain of a hearing at such an hour, withdraws with his book and bills, holding up his hands and eyes in consternation. The centre of the interest, however, is in the marvellous figure of the husband, listlessly seated by the fire, a picture of weariness, satiety, and disgust, such as perhaps was never painted before. He seems to have but newly returned from revels still more protracted than those of his household. His hat is on his head, his dress in such disorder as a man's must naturally be who has been up all night. But the way in which he is thrown into his chair, the listless stretch of all his limbs, the dull gaze of his wearied eyes, the sated emptiness of his countenance, form altogether a picture tragic in its force. Nothing but pleasure, so called—mad pursuit of excitement and unlimited self-indulgence—could have produced a dissatisfaction so entire, yet so dull, such a sickening at everything in heaven or earth. It is the very epic of miserable exhaustion—dull, heavy, hopeless, impatient. He has not a word to throw even at the dog who is sniffing at the contents of his pocket. The

listless limbs have not vigour enough left to kick it away. What is the good? is written on every line of the wonderful figure. Such a sermon upon vice was never preached before. Once more there is a dawning of pity in the mind of the looker-on. The poor wretch, capable of such dead disgust with himself and all the miserable delights into which he has been plunging, might surely have been capable of better things. This time it is the man who thus moves us; the wife, with her table thrust almost into the fire with the chilliness of luxury, yawns and gazes at him under her half-closed eyelids with a half-wondering contempt. Probably there has been a quarrel about something, for she holds in her hand what looks like a jewel-case; but she as yet has sounded no depths, and does not understand the tragedy which envelops him. The one figure is that of frivolity playing with the approaches of wickedness, utterly unaware of the depths which lie below and the consequences involved in them, lightly wondering and contemptuous, yawning out of simple laziness and want of sleep; the other is the embodied failure, the self-acknowledged futility and dissatisfaction of vicious pleasure. Of all Hogarth's impersonations, this has, perhaps, the highest meaning. It is scarcely surpassed by anything in art.

The next scene once more abandons the higher walk of genuine tragedy to plunge into hideous obscenities, into which we cannot follow the hero; nor is the meaning of the scene clear enough to reward

investigation. The chiefly notable thing in it is the strange stolid impassible figure of the child-woman, the heroine of the horrible tale, an unhappy little puppet tricked out with every kind of finery, and with the blood chilled in its very veins. The creature stands erect, but in such a stupor of suffering, or misery, or terror, that one feels she would fall prostrate at the merest touch, or crumble into nothing, a ghost of helpless unintentional vice, far more truly piteous and lamentable than the Harlot of the first series. But, except for this, the suggestions of the scene are simply disgusting, and the spectator is glad to hurry on to the comedy of the Toilet-scene, full of character and satire as it is. It ought to be tragi-comedy—for here it is that the wife and her lover are supposed to be making the fatal appointment, which ends in murder and death. But we are obliged to say that we can find nothing tragical, nothing passionate, no struggle of love or conscience in the unmoved countenance of the fine lady who is being curled and powdered, nor in the reclining figure of her lover, who might be giving her a description of the perfectly lawful and decorous seductions of a china monster, for anything that appears in his face. He is holding out to her a masquerade ticket, says the official explanation; and we are to suppose that up to this moment she has been but frivolous, and that now passion is about to carry everything before it, and the woman is on the verge of destruction. But we are bound to add, that without the official expla-

nation it would be very hard to find this out. Their conversation has not the least appearance of being confidential. The grinning hairdresser over her shoulder hears every word of it, and the action of the picture flows quite away from the hero and heroine to the wonderfully expressive group behind her. The lady's *levée* is evidently well attended. There is an assemblage of gentlemen of various classes, one with his hair in curl-papers—and one lady in walking-dress, who has evidently been attracted not by regard for her friend, but by the music, to which the heroine herself pays not the slightest attention. In the foreground, with his mouth wide open, in the act of singing, sits the favourite idol and abhorrence of the age, "that contemptible shadow of man, an Italian singer," as Dr Trusler describes him. A flute-player, with his whole soul in his music, stands behind, accompanying the song. No doubt the wide loose lips, and pug-nose, and imbecile expression given to the singer, were meant by Hogarth to express unmitigated contempt for the frivolous being who was rewarded with so much English gold. But the group surrounding him are not more dignified than the Italian. The lady is leaning forward in her chair, in an attitude uncomfortably suspended between sitting and standing, oblivious of the chocolate which a grinning black is pressing upon her; and the faces of the three men—one asleep, one idiotically ecstatic, the third musing over his coffee, and not without a glance at the conversation of the

lovers—are curiously real and original. One has a fan suspended to his wrist, another has come abroad with his hair carefully disposed in curl-papers; so fearless of ridicule were the Maccaroni of the age. And thus uttermost vanity and frivolity accompany to the very edge of ruin the doomed souls who have elected their own pleasure as the highest rule of existence. The costumes are out of date, but not the lesson, although let us hope our worst scandals of the present time are not so shameless.

In the next picture of the series the tragedy has come to a climax. It is the well-worn scene of discovery. The lover leaping out of the open window, the wife on her knees, in that miserable penitence which attends the fact of being found out, but with the tragic circumstance that the husband has been stabbed, and is dying. Perhaps the most powerful point in this picture is, that both are carried beyond the reach of emotion expressible in looks; the man sinks (in an impossible attitude, critics say—but that by the way) with the stupor of death upon him, beyond either rage or grief; the woman has fallen at his feet in a blank of horror and consternation which equally takes all feeling out of her face. Is it possible?—can it be?—the hapless wretch is crying dumbly in her hideous awakening. Sin so common, all the attendant circumstances so ordinary and usual, so many reasons why it should remain undiscovered for ever, why it should be excused, why the world should go on all the same with masqueraders and

Italian singers, and one's patches and curls becomingly arranged; and lo, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it has come to this! She has shrieked out in her sudden horror, and kneels before him, not penitent, too much shocked and startled for any feeling, gazing up at him as he falls, to see if it is true. The guilty lover turns round to give one look as he escapes; the burly watch bursts in at the door. Such is the tragedy; three hapless souls, but an hour since in the heyday of youth and self-indulgence, swept suddenly up in the fatal net of fate.

The concluding scene has that postscriptal character which is common to Hogarth's works. The men have both perished off the face of the earth — the husband murdered, the lover executed; and the unhappy creature who has stood between them, finding life intolerable, has just poisoned herself. We are done with them all, and we are glad of it. Their sorry tragedy is cleared away from the universe, and at the end comes in that strange consciousness of the unbreaking perpetual stream of life which makes every tragedy bearable. The miserable wife has returned to her father's house in the City, where all this time existence has been running on in its old channel. Heaven and earth have passed away in the mean time; earthquakes, convulsions, whatever is most fit to represent the climaxes and catastrophes through which his child has passed, have happened, and come to an end; but there stands the old father of the contract un-

changed, in the same coat and wig, and with the same soul, drawing her ring off her dead finger, lest it should be stolen; and there is the child, the little seed which has sprung into being amid all these storms, stretching out, unconscious, to kiss her dead face. The play is over, but the old existence lasts and the new begins.

Such is the last and most remarkable series of Hogarth's works. The spectator has a doubt, when all is over, whether he has read the story, or seen it acted, or only looked at it on the walls of the National Gallery or within the boards of a book —except, indeed, for the fact, most curious of all, that he has no sympathy with any of the characters in it—no desire to avert their fate, or yearning of pity over them. They fill him with wonder, or horror, or disgust, but with no fellow-feeling, or sense that they are creatures like himself. The highest aims of tragedy have been reached, and yet have been missed, with the strangest mixture of weakness and power. He closes the volume with perhaps a long-drawn breath of interest, but no sigh of human emotion. It is that story of guilty love which has gone deep to the heart, how often! notwithstanding all remonstrances of morality. It is the same story which Francesca, weeping, told to Dante in the dim country of despair; and yet we look on grimly with horror or interest, but without a tear or a thrill of feeling. How is it? We have not space enough to answer the question fully here.

This is, however, the prevailing defect of these wonderful works, and one which for ever bars their entrance into the highest rank. They are pitiless, emotionless, unimpassioned as the barest history; and yet passion, so called, is their prevailing topic. They are cold as the scenes of a spectacle, and yet it is life in its most tumultuous shapes which they represent. The cause is either a certain unbelief in emotion, such as may be excused to a man familiar with the sight of cold-blooded vice; or it is because he who puts this stern lesson on record stands in the place of the Pharisee who gloats upon the sight, and is curious as to all its details, even while he holds in his hand the savage stone which is to crush the offender—and not in that of the divine Spectator, who turns his sad countenance aside, overwhelmed by the wonder, the pity, the misery of this lamentable life. It was given to Hogarth to proclaim hoarsely, yet unmoved, that the wages of sin is death, the primitive lesson; but not to quicken the heart or stir the weeping blood of humanity with any tenderness for the hapless creatures, with a lost heaven above, and hell and purgatory within them, who thus sinned and died.

The intimation in the newspapers of the approaching publication of this new series contained one of Hogarth's savage covert sneers at the world which ventured to criticise and wonder at him. "Particular care is taken," he says, "that the whole shall not be liable to any exception on account of *indecency* or

inelegancy; and that none of the characters represented shall be personal." Still more trenchant is the advertisement of the sale of the pictures, in which he conceals his rage against his ungracious audience by a snarl of pretended deference to their opinion. He was still smarting under the sense of contempt and neglect which the sale of his former pictures had naturally produced; but it was no skilful way of conciliating the public to address them as follows:—

"As, according to the standard so righteously and so laudably established by picture-dealers, picture-cleaners, picture-frame-makers, and other connoisseurs, the works of a painter are to be esteemed more or less valuable as they are more or less scarce, and as the living painter is most of all affected by the inferences resulting from this and other considerations equally candid and edifying, Mr Hogarth, by way of precaution, not puff, begs leave to urge that probably this will be the last sale of pictures he may ever exhibit, because of the difficulty of vending such a number at once to any tolerable advantage; and that the whole number he has already exhibited, of the historical or humorous kind, does not exceed fifty—of which the three sets called 'The Harlot's Progress,' 'The Rake's Progress,' and that now to be sold, make twenty; so that whoever has a taste of his own to rely on, and is not too squeamish, and has courage enough to own it by daring to give them a place in a collection till Time, the supposed finisher, but real destroyer, of paintings, has rendered them fit for those more sacred repositories where schools, names, heads, masters, &c., attain their last stage of preferment, may from hence be convinced that multiplicity at least of his, Mr Hogarth's, pieces, will be no diminution of their value."

The result was much what might have been anticipated from a preliminary struggle which had thus become personal between the painter and the world.

The following narrative, however, throws a curious light upon the smallness of the circle to which picture-buying can have been possible in those days. We can scarcely imagine that any amount of petulance in words would have the effect of emptying Christie's saleroom, for instance, were the works of a well-known painter of the present time about to be offered to the public. When the reader considers that Hogarth was in the full blaze of his fame, and that his prints were as good as an estate to him—prints taken from the very pictures in question; and that these pictures are now among our national treasures, chief gems of our English collection; that they were the only remarkable productions then existing from the hand of an English painter, and are still unrivalled at the end of more than a century,—the following narrative of their sale, given by Mr Lane, the purchaser, will be scarcely credible:—

"The sale was to take place by a kind of auction, where every bidder was to write on a ticket the price he was disposed to give, with his name subscribed to it. These papers were to be received by Mr Hogarth for the space of one month, and the highest bidder, at twelve o'clock on the last day of the month, was to be the purchaser. This strange mode of proceeding probably disobliged the public, and there seemed at that time to be a combination against Hogarth, who, perhaps, from the frequent and extraordinary approbation of his works, might have imbibed some degree of vanity, which the town in general, friends and foes, seemed resolved to mortify. If this was the case—and to me it was fully apparent—they fully effected their design; for on the 6th of June 1750, which was to decide the fate of this capital work, when I arrived at the Golden Head, expecting, as was the case at the sale of 'The

Harlot's Progress,' to find his study full of noble and great personages, I only found Hogarth and his friend Dr Parsons, Secretary to the Royal Society. I had bid £110. No one arrived; and, ten minutes before twelve, I told the artist I would make the pounds guineas. The clock struck, and Mr Hogarth wished me joy of my purchase, hoping it was an agreeable one; I said, 'Perfectly so.' Dr Parsons was very much disturbed, and Hogarth very much disappointed, and truly with great reason. The former told me the painter had hurt himself by naming so early an hour for the sale; and Hogarth, who overheard him, said, in a marked tone and manner, 'Perhaps it may be so.' I concurred in the same opinion, said he was poorly rewarded for his labour, and, if he chose, he might have till three o'clock to find a better bidder. Hogarth warmly accepted the offer, and Dr Parsons proposed to make it public. I thought this unfair, and forbade it. At one o'clock Hogarth said, 'I shall trespass no longer on your generosity; you are the proprietor, and if you are pleased with the purchase, I am abundantly so with the purchaser.' He then desired me to promise that I would not dispose of the paintings without informing him, nor permit any person to meddle with them under pretence of cleaning them, as he always desired to do that himself."

And all the time the world was showering wealth on Farinelli, as in our own day it went to see Tom Thumb, driving poor Haydon frantic. In the latter case it is perhaps, let us say it with a sigh, comprehensible; but Hogarth's disappointment is a proof that, though an artist may quarrel with the big world in general, he must not quarrel with a limited class in it, or that he must take the consequences. To-day, when the last new millionaire is ready to bid over my lord's head to any amount, the consequences would no doubt be much less serious.

Hogarth's next work was the series of "Indus-

try and Idleness," as exemplified in the history of Goodchild and Idle, two London 'prentices—a drama quite according to the taste of the time, in which the good lad has so perpetually the best of it, that the wonder is how the wicked one could show a disinterestedness and self-devotion so much above the well-rewarded respectability of his comrade. "The thrifty citizens of London welcomed these works warmly, and hung them in public and private places as guides and examples to their children and dependants," says Cunningham. About the same time Hogarth produced a portrait of old Simon Fraser of Lovat, which, we are told, "was so popular" that it was impossible to supply impressions sufficiently fast to satisfy the eager demands of the public. Nothing can be more curious than the character of this portrait, the pawky, shrewd, humorous old face, which is the last that could possibly be imagined to belong to an arch-rebel lying under sentence of death for his country. It is comprehensible how the fancy of the public must have been caught by the frightful contrast between those homely cunning features and the tragic place they held on Temple Bar in all the sublimity of death and patriotism and high treason.

It is painful, however, to have stories to tell of our painter which are not pleasant stories. He went to France after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, and no sooner had he crossed the Channel than the vulgar instincts of the irrepressible Englishman seem to have

burst forth in him without restraint. The fact is part of his character,—and yet it is always strange to discover under the hearty, joyous, cordial exterior which is traditionary to John Bull, that curious, cold, hard, emotionless kernel which is so often associated with it—a heart entirely devoid of genial human sympathy, and incapable of entering into, or even realising, the feelings of others. The same nature which made our painter calmly indifferent to the sufferings and calamities of his own heroes and heroines, made him loudly contemptuous of all external circumstances to which he was unaccustomed. "He was displeased from the first with the people, the country, the houses, and the fare. All he looked upon he declared to be in bad taste. The houses, he said, were either gilt or befouled. He laughed when he saw a ragged boy; and at the sight of silk stockings with holes in them he burst out into very imprudent language." The result was, that he was summarily sent back, two guards accompanying him on board the English packet, who, "having insolently twirled him round and round on the deck, told him he might proceed on his voyage without molestation;" a process which many a French guard and many an English traveller would have been but too glad to repeat since Hogarth's day. He revenged himself by a design called "The Roast Beef of Old England," and at a later period by two pictures called respectively "England" and "France," and supposed to represent the eve of an invasion, in which frogs and

soupe maigre on the one side, and riotous living on the other, are the chief features—quite conventional, and not perhaps such telling arguments to the present age as they were to Hogarth's. It would be difficult to go over in detail all his remaining works. The only late series with a moral meaning is the one entitled "The Four Stages of Cruelty," a subject too revolting to be discussed; and the two prints, called "Beer Street" and "Gin Lane," in the last of which occur two figures unsurpassed for ghastly tragedy, one of which, a half-naked woman, from whose helpless arms her child is falling, sits unconscious, leering at the spectator with drunken imbecility; while the other, half man, half skeleton, in a stupor which is partly drink and partly death, sits on the stair below her, with glazed eyes and falling jaw, unable to raise the glass to his ghastly open mouth —figures which haunt the beholder like the visions of a nightmare. Among his other pictures there is a burlesque of Paul before Felix, "designed in the Dutch style," of which Cunningham tells us that "nothing can surpass it for broad humour," though disgust is the only feeling with which we find ourselves capable of regarding it. He afterwards—as, we suppose, a kind of *amende honorable*—painted a serious version of the same subject, which is as heavy and turgid as heart could devise. After this, however, our painter recovered himself. He produced "The March to Finchley," full of fun and movement; and the varied scenes of the Election, from which we

have the clearest and most graphic notion of what politics were in those days, and how the business was managed which authority is only now trying seriously to bring within due control. Things have changed mightily in the mean time; and yet it is curious to note how little some things have changed.

In the year 1753, when he had reached the mature age of fifty-six, Hogarth made his *début* in literature. "What?" he says, himself—

> "What? a book, and by Hogarth! then twenty to ten
> All he's gained by his pencil he'll lose by his pen.
> Perhaps it may be so—howe'er, miss or hit,
> He will publish—here goes; it is double or quit."

The work was the *Analysis of Beauty*, a book full of trenchant criticisms upon everybody who differed with himself, and in which he set forth a theory which he had indicated some time before by a waving line drawn upon a palette in the foreground of his own portrait; on this line was engraven the words, *Line of beauty*. "No Egyptian hieroglyphic ever amused more than it did for a time," he says. "Painters and sculptors came to me to know the meaning of it, being as much puzzled with it as other people." We have no space left to enter into either the book or its theory, but it had upon Hogarth the almost fatal effect which pen and ink seem to have upon those to whom pigments and pencils are the natural weapons —it drove him into public argumentation, abuse, and defence. Unfortunately, as was the fashion of the time, personal questions of all kinds got mixed up in

the discussion of principles. Passion grew warmer and warmer as it was expressed; and the Englishman's theoretical contempt for the old masters, who were continually thrown in his teeth, grew to such a heat that it drove him to the most unequal and unlikely contest. A picture, by some supposed to be by Correggio, had been a short time before sold for £400 at a sale of pictures, and Hogarth, with insane rivalry, offered to take up the same subject for the same price, thus putting himself directly in competition with his predecessor—a proceeding both foolish and undignified; especially foolish, considering the subject, since he must have known that pathos was not his forte. It was "Sigismunda weeping over the Heart of her Husband" that he undertook to paint, with the Correggio standing by to invite comparison. Failure must have been involved from the first in such a wager of battle. The painter was now sixty-two, and gave signs, as he well might, of having failed a little from his height of force. The subject was utterly out of his way. His motive could be little more than one of those stings of rivalship and emulation which are naturally short-lived in an old man. He had attained most things that men desire. He was well off, famous, the founder of a national school of art; he acknowledges even the "partiality" with which the world had received his works. He was Sergeant-Painter to the King, the highest mark of official favour. But all these good things did not defend him from that sting of vanity. The picture

was a commission from Sir Richard (afterwards Lord) Grosvenor, who, "falling into the clutches of the dealers in old pictures," as Hogarth expresses it, became after a while less enthusiastic about it than could have been desired. The proud painter immediately rose in arms, and wrote a hasty letter, haughtily exonerating his patron from his bargain if he thought the price too great, and throwing in an allusion to "Mr Hoare, the banker," as a threat at the end. Lord Grosvenor immediately replied with pardonable resentment, setting (on his side) the painter free to make "Sigismunda" over to Mr Hoare, if he liked it. "I really think the performance so striking and inimitable," he adds, ironically, "that the constantly having it before one's eyes would be too often occasioning melancholy ideas to arise in one's mind." Another surly note from Hogarth closed the correspondence, but the picture was never withdrawn from the painter's studio. In his pride and resentment he forbade his widow, by his will, to sell it for less than £500, and we do not find that she was ever tempted to do so. It was sold only after her death, when no guardian of Hogarth's fame was left in the world.

The critics, who had fallen upon his *Analysis of Beauty* as one man, now threw themselves with equal or increased vigour on the unfortunate picture thus left upon his hands. "A set of miscreants," he says, "the expounders of the mysteries of old pictures," heaped every kind of abuse on his "Sigismunda."

And dauntless and virulent as was the old man himself, he *was* old and worn with much labour, and his health was affected by his mortification. "However mean the vendor of poisons may be, the mineral is destructive," he goes on. "To me its operation was troublesome enough. Ill-nature spread so fast, that now was the time for every little dog in the profession to bark and revive the old spleen which appeared at the time of the *Analysis*. The anxiety that attends endeavouring to recollect ideas long dormant, and the misfortunes which clung to this transaction, coming on at a time when nature demands quiet, and something besides exercise to cheer it, added to my long sedentary life, brought on an illness which continued twelve months." When he recovered from his illness, it was at a time when "war abroad and contention at home engrossed every one's mind. Prints were thrown into the background, and the stagnation rendered it necessary that I should do some *timed thing* to recover my lost time and stop a gap in my income." Whether this picture of pecuniary need was true or not it is hard to say; but it is curious to see the old painter, who had always so strenuously set himself against the tide, whatever that tide might be, thus taking up the side of power and authority for once in his life. "This drew forth my print of *The Times*, a subject which tended to the restoration of peace and unanimity," he proceeds. But it did anything but promote these objects in Hogarth's own experience. It roused against him

the unrestrained tongue of Wilkes, who had been his friend. In all our painter's pugilistic experience, he had never yet met such an antagonist. Whether he had shared Wilkes's political opinions before this encounter, we are not told—indeed, it is to be supposed that he was no politician, difficult though it must have been for such a man to keep out of the excitement of the prevailing contests. "Hogarth sacrificed private friendship at the altar of party madness, and lent his aid to the government," we are told; and immediately the *North Briton* brought out a furious article on "The King's Sergeant-Painter, William Hogarth." Hogarth retaliated with a concentrated force still more crushing: nature and his craft had provided him with the necessary weapons, and his reply was a portrait of Wilkes, so savagely like, so full of the fierce satire of truth, that the town was electrified. "My friends advised me," says Hogarth, "to laugh at the nonsense of party-wit—who would mind it? but . . . I wished to return the compliment, *and turn it to some advantage.*" The blow struck deeply, and called up Churchill, Wilkes's henchman, in defence of his principal. Hogarth struck again, but this time more feebly. "I had an old plate by me, with some parts ready sunk as the background, and a dog, . . . and so patched up a print of Master Churchill in the character of a bear. The pleasure and pecuniary advantage derived from these two engravings," says the uncompromising old warrior with fine satisfaction, "together with occasionally

riding on horseback, restored me to as much health as can be expected at my time of life."

But amid these storms life was beginning to wane. Though he had quarrelled and struggled all his life, we hear of no such direct personal exchange of hostilities; and he was old, and the jar ran through him, body and soul. He produced but one notable work after these events—a work which we would gladly leave out of the record were it not too remarkable to be omitted. It is the print known by the name of "Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism," and is evidently an attempt to throw all the brilliant searching light of art upon the extraordinary success which attended the preaching of Wesley and Whitfield. Hogarth was not conscious of his own curious connection with the reformers of his age. He did not know what a hoarse, vigorous, unwilling pioneer his genius had been to their more spiritual labours. And with his usual sharp eye for the absurd, and intolerance of exaggeration, and want of sympathy with the feelings of others, he places before us a combination of religious madnesses which it is painful to look upon, and which it is still more painful to quote as the last work of his life. Clear-sighted as he was, he had no more comprehension of the mission he himself had exercised than if he had been blind; nor is it probable that Wesley would have owned or acknowledged the prophet's work of Hogarth. The world had need enough of both; but until the generation was over and past, and God had written

on its grave that moral which only posterity can read, who could tell that between these two warning voices there was any sympathy or parallel? Hogarth impales the so-called fanatics upon the end of his spear without mercy. Probably there was even some truth of fact in his picture; but there is nothing of that higher truth which is beyond and above all mere reality.

But even while he recorded, with vehemence so bitter, his strong unalterable prejudices, and gave forth his hasty, ignorant, popular judgment with the promptitude and energy which had always distinguished him, the life of the old painter was waning. He was old, though he had scarcely begun to feel it; and the unkind assaults of his friends—for such both Wilkes and Churchill seem to have been—had jarred him through and through. He did as men do when they are sinking out of life's common capabilities. He took a house in retired Chiswick, among the trees and gardens; he left off work, "amusing himself with making slight sketches and retouching his plates." He went up and down to town now and then, and now recovered, now lost strength, as that piteous process of dying demanded; but "complained that he was no longer able to think with the readiness, and work with the elasticity of spirit" which had been habitual to him. It was apparently in this waning time that he made the notes, so full of vigour and passion and characteristic pugnacity, from which we have quoted so much. And yet, by moments, the

self-disclosure fell into other strains. Sometimes he murmurs feebly, with the complaining of a child—of "one, till now rather my friend and flatterer, attacking me in so infamous and malign a style." Sometimes he rises into the formal yet half-deprecating self-assertion which was considered in that age to be the fit tone for a deathbed. "I can safely assert that I have invariably endeavoured to make those about me tolerably happy," he says with tremulous dignity, and a strange eighteenth-century satisfaction in the contemplation of his own goodness. "My greatest enemy cannot say I ever did an intentional injury; though, without ostentation, I could produce many instances of men that have been essentially benefited by me. What may follow, God knows." When October came with warnings of approaching winter, he went back to Leicester Fields to spend the darker season in town; but spent only one day there, his career being over. He died quite suddenly, overtaken all at once by the shadow which had been coming on so slowly and so long. He was sixty-seven, full of years and honours; and yet died worried and wearied and vexed with the contradictions of life.

There is little to be said of him beyond what has been said. He was childless, and had no personal life to throw gleams of more human interest upon the story of his career. No man before or since has painted a story like him, or set forth a parable with such authentic force and boldness. Without any

absolute horror of or indignation against vice, he traced its course with a hand that never flinched from any detail, or hesitated at any catastrophe, making it so plain to an age which needed teaching that he who ran might read. He was genial, vehement, and warm in manners and temper; but his intellect was cold, and did its work without much assistance from the heart. Before his pictures the vulgar laugh, and the serious spectator holds his peace, gazing often with eyes awestricken at the wonderful unimpassioned tragedy. But never a tear comes at Hogarth's call. It is his sentence of everlasting expulsion from the highest heaven of art.

THE END.



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